

BROADCAST MINDS

By
RONALD KNOX

"Our age has been rendered conceited by the multitude of new discoveries and inventions, but in the realm of philosophy it is much less in advance of the past than it imagines itself to be."—LORD RUSSELL.

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THERE is a doctrine which holds that the story of Frankenstein is a parable of all human history ; that man, with his restless ingenuity, invents only to find himself the slave of his invention. The machines which he devises, by way of making life as he knows it easier for himself, are destined to impose themselves on him, first as cherished luxuries, then as necessities, and, before he has had time to realize what has happened, he finds that he has altered ~~his~~ his own mode of living, his own human relations, to correspond with the new opportunities granted him. Thus, it is easy to see how the motor-car in a thousand ways has modified our whole conception of home and family life. Whether these developments come by an iron law of determination, or whether in the last resort man can always choose to be the master, not the slave, of his instruments, is a question which does not concern us here, though we may have occasion to discuss it later on. All I wish to point out here is that there are certain inventions so fruitful in their increase of opportunity that they are bound to influence not merely the life

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of man as an individual but the whole basis of the political society in which he lives. A new weapon can suffice to affect that delicate balance of power which oscillates between Government and the governed. .

The most obvious instance is gunpowder, with all its *sequelæ* in military history. The possibility of killing by mass destruction told at first in favour of the Government ; the disappearance of the feudal system and the rise of the absolute monarchies in Europe must have been due, in large part at least, to the centralizing influence of explosives. The moated castle was no longer an inviolable sanctuary ; the control of man-power lost its old importance when it was overshadowed by the control of killing-power, easily kept under lock and key. But the advantage was not all on one side ; explosives facilitate massacre, the weapon of Government ; they also facilitate assassination, the weapon of the governed. If we may trust the official story on which we were all brought up in our youth, a small conspiracy very nearly succeeded, at the very beginning of the seventeenth century, in destroying a whole governmental machine. The doubts which have been cast upon the story rest largely on the difficulty with which a private citizen must have been confronted when he proposed to lay in large quantities of explosive without arousing suspicion. If the doubts are unfounded, it shows how careful Governments ought to be about keeping the key of the dump. On the whole, they have been successful, and revolutions have only been possible where the loyalty of troops could not be relied

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on. If Louis XVI, for example, had given the order to fire. . . .

If our modern world is built up largely on the medieval invention of gunpowder, it is also largely built up on the medieval invention of printing. And printing is a kind of spiritual explosive, with the same duality of influence. We are accustomed to think of the Press as an instrument of liberation; that is because its effects are more noticed, where they are more sensational. We think of Junius, or Martin Marprelate. But a moment's reflection will suggest that the introduction of printing has made possible a far more exact regimentation of thought, wherever governments, armies, or ecclesiastical organizations have found the opportunity to express their views by this means. Anybody who had occasion to follow, not the Press of one country but the Press of the world, during the Great War, must have been conscious of the enormous power mere print had in forming and therefore in standardizing public opinion. The manipulation of facts, the interpretation of tendencies, the exposition of ideals were taken in hand as confidently elsewhere as in our own country, often in a diametrically opposite sense, but on the whole with as much success in one country as in another. The measure of the tyranny under which our minds worked at that time is the ready welcome we accord nowadays to a literature full of rather callow anti-war reaction. While war lasts, I doubt whether there is one reader in twenty who remembers that the impressions which are being doled out to him are

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artificial impressions, dictated by a censorship. And it is worth while remembering that in a sense this is going on the whole time. Whenever we see a statement in print, the odds are that the colour and the setting of that statement are, somehow, official. The thing would not have been printed if somebody or other had not had the money to pay for printing it ; would not have been distributed, if somebody or other had not commanded the means of distribution. For months past, every letter I have received has been utilized by the British Government in the unsuccessful attempt to make me instal a telephone. They have not persuaded me to appreciate the telephone, but they have taught me something about the power which comes through print.

The immediate effect of printing, which makes it possible for the man in power to communicate his ideas, without fear of adulteration, not to thousands but to millions of the governed, is regimentation of thought. We forget this, because we are more accustomed to read, and to treasure in first editions, the works of authors who have come forward as rebels, and disturbed the thought of their time by putting new ideas in print. And on the whole we are right ; on the whole it is true that printing is the antithesis of gunpowder, and operates more effectually in assassination than in massacre. Dynamite is kept under lock and key more easily than ideas. You can control the printing press, at least in its early stages, without much physical difficulty ; though even here it is well to remember that Campion found

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it easier to print his *Ten Reasons* under the eaves of Stonor Court unobserved than Fawkes to store up his barrels. But censorship is a cumbrous and an odious work ; nor can human calculation ever make certain which ideas are live wires and which are duds. An eighteenth-century censor might easily have "passed" Rousseau as harmless rubbish, yet they say Rousseau was largely responsible for the French Revolution. On the whole, the influence of the Press has been subversive rather than reactionary. The author of *Areopagitica* might, if he had been on the other side, have stigmatized printing, not gunpowder, as the invention of the Arch-Rebel.

In our own time we have witnessed the invention of a new means for transmitting thought, curiously distinguished from those which went before it. Broadcasting is designed, in idea, not to fulfil the work of printing but to destroy it. Thus, before the advent of compulsory education, Englishmen, as Mark Twain would have put it, "spelt better than they pronounced". Or rather, they did not spell at all, they only pronounced ; and when the syllables of the word "Daventry" were proposed to them for imitation, they called the place "Daintry", because it was less trouble. Then education came, and the reading of print ; and every Englishman, outside the limited range of the governing classes, made haste to call it "Da-ven-try", to show that he could read. Board-school English grew up, and a clerk in an office was sacked for not being able to spell better than Queen Elizabeth. Everything was to be pronounced "as

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spelt ” ; local dialects persisted, each with its own canon of pronunciation, so that Oldham was pronounced Owdham in Lancashire, because that was “how it was spelt”. The written word, not the word as spoken, became the standard of speech. All this the British Broadcasting Corporation is likely to reverse. It has settled down at Daventry, never again to be called Daintry, because the Board-school pronunciation of the word has become fixed for all time. But wherever spelling and pronunciation are apparently at variance it will in future be the spoken word, not the written word as heretofore, that is the standard of orthodoxy. Before long, a man who has forgotten how to read at the age of seventeen—and there are more of them than we think—will be able to talk fluently about “abiogenesis”, pronounced however the B.B.C. has told him to pronounce it, but will not be able to spell a simple word like “laughter”.

It will be suggested that I am going too fast, and exaggerating the illiteracy of the future. *Chi vivra verra* ; I am not, of course, suggesting that twenty or thirty years from now the man in the street will be unable to read an advertisement hoarding. But already the wireless is beginning to replace printed matter ; it supplies, for example, educational talks for schools in the afternoon. And we are not, I fancy, at the end of the process by which the facilities for “listening” will be multiplied, in public places for example. Anyhow, it is clear that wireless has taken over some, and is prepared to take over more, of the work once done by the editor and the publisher. It is not content to be a mere

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instrument for reproducing *sounds*, in competition with the theatre and the gramophone ; it is determined to put the spoken word across, and to take its place, in doing so, among our educators. It is a fresh spout for the dissemination of opinions.

And the wireless, unlike print, is wholly a Governmental influence ; at least in countries like our own, where it has become a State monopoly. Across the Atlantic, where rival companies compete with rival wave-lengths, it may yet go in the opposite direction ; become the plaything of faddists, who have money enough to air their eccentricities in this way, and create, in that country of strange tolerances, a chaos of conflicting beliefs. But here, though it be the property of a Corporation, that Corporation is for all practical purposes as much part of the Government machine as the police force. Lord Russell, in an amusing passage (*The Scientific Outlook*, p. 199), has commented on the rôle which broadcasting played at the time of the General Strike. What he has failed to observe is that the strikers had only themselves to thank for it. By allowing the compositors to join in, they silenced at one blow the discordant, carping voices of the daily Press, which might easily have made for disunion ; thus leaving the Government in a position of propaganda supremacy which it never enjoyed during the war. " Pirate " wireless, in a country where the monopoly exists, is almost unthinkable. For better or worse, the political sympathies of the broadcasting agencies will be, with very slight variations, the political sympathies of a

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governing group. And, since the monopoly exists, the Government for practical purposes makes itself responsible, not only for the political gospel which is preached by the Corporation, but for all the other gospels, religious, social, philosophic, scientific, literary, artistic, cultural, which are preached by the Corporation; it is the mouthpiece of a nation.

I have no doubt that if I were arguing the point with a politician he would disclaim, with some uneasiness, the responsibility I am for thrusting on him. "Oh, over that sort of thing", he would assure me, "we do not interfere". But the Government *does* interfere; it *interfères* continuously as long as it grants a monopoly of broadcasting facilities, in return for a tribute to the Post Office. Whenever Hobbs and Nobbs are invited by the B.B.C. to express their views on art, while Noakes and Stokes are not invited, the British Government is preventing Noakes and Stokes from making their voices heard. Hence the panic-stricken anxiety of the British Broadcasting Corporation, much misunderstood by the people who write angry letters to the papers, to let every possible side have a hearing within (what seems to it) reason, and to restrain its speakers from indulging in "controversial" observations—that is, observations which will arouse protest. It is hard to see how it could manage its business otherwise.

In any case, I am not concerned here to criticize. The point I wish to make is that this strange position of the British Broadcasting Corporation must lead, I think,

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inevitably to the setting up of a kind of standard culture, which will be the "official" culture of the nation. Certain points of view in history, in criticism, in world-politics, in questions of social legislation, in morals, in hygiene, will become official points of view ; as regulative to the minds of those whom the B.B.C. employs as its singularly hybrid pronunciation of English is regulative to their utterance. From time to time, of course, "experts" will lecture on this or that topic, and because they are experts will be allowed to kick a loose leg. But on the whole I think the listening public prefers old favourites to occasional star turns ; it likes to know what it is getting ; besides, the great ones of the world have not always good microphone voices.

I have not mentioned religion ; here there has been no question of creating a "standard" national culture. In point of fact, I suppose about 60 per cent. of Englishmen believe almost exactly the same in religious matters, but they hate to be told so ; they will cling to the shadow of the isms they were brought up in. Since the time of the ill-fated Cowper-Temple clause we have given up trying to solve ecclesiastical disputes on the principle of the Highest Common Factor. Fortunately, there is all Sunday to play with ; and this has made it possible for the Corporation to work out an elaborate system of concurrent endowment, which probably functions as smoothly as any system could. The danger is, to my mind, that the Englishman of the future should come to regard a religion not merely as a thing which is only to be practised on Sunday, but as a thing

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which is only to be believed on Sunday. True to the principle of avoiding controversy, the divines who stand at the microphone commonly make their appeal to the emotions rather than to the intelligence, and assume, rather too optimistically, a general agreement with their own point of view on the part of the listener. Englishmen are fond of an occasional spiritual titillation, as long as it makes no particular claim on the intellect ; and many of them, I fancy, would not be consciously confused if they heard flat atheism talked all the week, rounded off by a hymn or two and a straightforward, manly religious talk on the Sunday evening. I do not imply that this is what is happening at present ; religion has not yet been banished from week-day performances. My point is that the Sunday programme ought not to be regarded as a corrective, if and when the culture retailed during the week loses touch with the traditional culture of Christendom—a possibility which we have to consider in the next chapter. Sunday evening is an extra ; perhaps—who knows?—an extra not universally appreciated ; and an extra it will remain.

The immediate danger I foresee is what I call broadcast-mindedness. By that I mean, primarily, the habit of taking over, from self-constituted mentors, a ready-made, standardized philosophy of life, instead of constructing, with however imperfect materials, a philosophy of life for oneself. In politics it is easy enough to see what this means, as I have suggested above. It means that the great generality of men become good subjects but not, in any real sense, good

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citizens. They vote, they pay their taxes, they obey the orders of Government departments, they assist the police, under suggestion from without; they do not contribute anything of their own, their own sense of need or experience of life, towards the formation of a general will; they acquiesce in that general will, which is formed by a governing class of experts. I put the matter brutally, not because I am convinced, as Lord Russell appears to be convinced, that this is a state of things towards which we are inevitably moving, but because I want to make it clear what is the logical issue of our present tendencies, if they remain unchecked. The logical issue of our present tendencies, in political life, is a subservience to the expert more complete than the subservience of our ancestors to their Whig overlords in the early eighteenth century.

But this political subservience is only the outward manifestation of a more subtle spiritual change. Man is not only a political but a speculative animal; and where he is left to himself he will fashion for himself a philosophy of life, never quite in harmony with his neighbour's. Whether ghosts exist, whether suicide is ever justifiable, what are the conditions of a just war, whether marriage is a state of blessedness—these and a hundred other disputes, beloved of school debating societies, have always divided the sympathies of mankind; have enabled the most ignorant and the least acute of men nevertheless to *hold* opinions, his own. If you accept as authoritative a revelation which claims supernatural sanctions, to that extent your choice of

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opinions will be limited; authority will decide for you some, though by no means all, of the points which you regarded hitherto as debatable. You accept even this limited correction only because you regard the authority in question as self-evidently qualified to dictate in its own field; where that field stops, you go on arguing, as violently as ever. And this I take to be a natural part of man's make-up, a desire to think for himself, even as he desires to own property, though it be only on a small scale. It is this natural independence of the human mind which is threatened when you are cut short in the middle of your argument by a voice emanating from a spout in the corner of the room, which assures you in an elaborate Oxford accent that *The Sewer* is not, as you were just maintaining, pretentious nonsense, but (in the opinion of all the best critics) an epoch-making contribution to literature. You are threatened with a kind of cultural ostracism if you maintain an opinion which, however shallow, is your own.

I may be reminded at this point that broadcastmindedness existed long before broadcasting. True enough, it has existed ever since they taught us all to read, and then gave us penny papers to exercise the faculty on. Conspiracies of expert opinion in the Press have long cowed us into silence by assuring us that this or that was the opinion of all progressive, enlightened and humane men. There fell a shadow over our debates when somebody broke in with the magic phrase "It says in the paper that . . ." *It* says, much in the same sense as "it rains", "it snows"; there

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is a general tide or body of opinion that forms itself without reference to us loafers in the public house, inevitable as the weather and sometimes as incalculable. In *the* paper ; we are not told that the item in question was shoved in by a sub-editor at the last moment and rests on the authority of a wretched journalist who lives in fear of offending Lord So-and-so ; " the " paper has acquired, from the vast circulation it enjoys, a unity and a uniqueness attributed, by a less enlightened age, to the Bible. " The " paper ; as we say " the " pictures ; the whole miserable hotch-potch of visual impressions which is dished up in the course of an evening's performance is viewed as a single fact. " The " paper ; as we say " the " wireless.

But observe, when we talk about " the " wireless we are nearer the truth. For the wireless, in England, is a unique force ; there is no question of two wirelesses differing, as two newspapers may differ in their outlook. And there is unity about it as well as uniqueness ; its programme, thought out at more leisure and with less need for sensational effect than that of its rival the news-sheet, does to some extent represent a single policy and a single purpose. To be sure, there is no temptation, except at moments of crisis, for the wireless to suppress the true or suggest the false, as newspapers sometimes do for particular ends. But the directors of wireless programmes are selecting all the time what it is important that we should hear, and what view of it ought to be presented to us ; with no corrective, save the fear of angry letters from subscribers—and these come, as anybody

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knows who is accustomed to receiving letters from strangers, from the less balanced portion of mankind. Go to the root of the situation, and you find that whereas the newspaper editor is a skilful demagogue, the director of programmes is a dictator.

And there is a further influence to be considered, which both accounts for the respect paid by the public to the utterances of "the wireless", and to some extent determines the colour given to them. Wireless communication is a comparatively recent achievement of science, and scientists are still at work perfecting it and finding out its possibilities. And therefore, for the ordinary citizen, the announcer is vaguely conceived as speaking in the name of, and in the interests of, that vague thing which so arrests and so terrifies him, called Science.

Not many months ago, a thing I confess unusual with me, I was listening to the wireless. I heard the inventor of that system say in Italian, "Holy Father, speak to the world". And thereupon followed a Latin address, made by the Father of Christendom to every soul that cared to listen just then to the wireless. It is difficult to imagine any occasion more impressive, I will not say to any Catholic, but to any mind which has a proper perspective of history. The Voice which spoke was one never heard before on the shores of England—Gregory, Eleutherius and Celestine only reached us by messengers. This invention of yesterday seemed to have bridged the gulf, not merely between Rome and Oxford, but between the Catacombs and the

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twentieth century. And its author was there, at the other end, offering the fruits of his own genius to the master whom, in common with those other hundreds of millions, he serves. The latest world-opportunity, at the disposal of the oldest of world-powers. I have been told, I think, that the first printed document in existence is the declaration of a Papal indulgence. If so, it is as it should be; the invention of printing, with all its infinite possibilities for good and evil, should first be used to send a message of peace to burdened sinners. And here was the same situation, after a fashion; the instrument which you associated with the common trivialities of life, the weather report and the racing news and the prices of stock, *breathing out an utterance which was almost a cento of consecrated phrases from the Latin liturgy*; and the voice, that Voice.

I wondered what a listener who was neither a Catholic nor in touch with Catholic thought would be making of all this. And it occurred to me that probably, for him, the experience was one of supreme incongruity, as if he had seen a Red Indian piloting an aeroplane.

To such a man, assuming at any rate that he was an Englishman, the Pope is simply a thing that used to happen in history books. A thing far remote in antiquity; a back number. Whereas this new toy science has given us should speak to us, surely, of the new world to which it belongs; of man's spirit fighting indomitably against the difficulties and dangers of his material surroundings, subduing now this force of nature, now that; making the

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air his pathway, and the seas his dark tunnel, and the winds his messengers ; man with no need of a Creator, man enthroned. The Catacombs lie as far behind him, almost, as the Aurignacian caves where he scrawled his schoolboy pictures ; Rome is the picturesque capital of a Mediterranean lake, long since thought of as the open sea. The Latin tongue is a puzzle-competition, now unpopular, which used to absorb the energies of growing youth, and distract it from its task of pushing forward the work of science. The Pope of Rome talking in Latin ; what waste of a wavelength!

I have perhaps exaggerated the reactions of my imaginary listener ; but I believe these must have been his processes of thought if he had the skill to interpret them to himself. There is no conflict, except on paper, between science and religion ; but there is a conflict, at the very root of men's minds, between science and history. The consciousness that we can do without effort something which our ancestors would not have conceived it possible to do, even in the abstract, marks us off sharply from them, makes it seem as if we lived in a different world altogether, not the continuation but the reincarnation of theirs.

" Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules,
Of Hector and Lysander, and of such great names as these . . .
These heroes of antiquity ne'er saw a cannon-ball,
Nor knew the force of powder . . . slay their foes withal ;
But our brave boys do know it, and banish all their fears—"

and so on. There you have, isolated in particularly

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meaningless contrast, the instinct of which I am speaking ; the instinct that everything which happened before things were as they are now does not count. This secure illusion of modernity is prevalent at all times ; in our own it is more prevalent than usual, because we have the war as a convenient toe-mark to separate us from our past. Before the war, after all, there was no broadcasting, though there was wireless ; the man in the street had not heard of Einstein, barely of Freud ; nobody had had time to work on the new theories of the atom. It has all come upon us so suddenly ; we can hardly remember that already, by 1914, people talked of the conquering march of science, and hailed their age as an age of enlightenment.

The very instrument, therefore, by which our modern educators speak to us is obscurely associated in our mind with the age of science which it symbolizes. If it speaks to us with the voice of the scientist, or of scientific subjects, we sit there awed from the outset. Not by any logical calculation ; the principle that science talked through the microphone must be good science is no more reasonable than the dictum " Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat ". But the association of ideas moves us ; or why is it that nowadays, in discussing the weather prospects, people will always tell you, " the wireless says " this and that? The wireless has no access to private information about the weather, any more than about the Stock Exchange. It only gives you the weather report which you will see in the paper to-morrow, and you are no better off for knowing whether

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it will rain during the night, unless you are a burglar by profession. But, since weather reports were broadcast, people not only quote them more but believe them more (though they are as inaccurate as ever) than they did in the Newspaper Age; conveyed through space, the information seems somehow to come from the horse's mouth, and is dutifully recorded. The same illusion prevails, despite ourselves, when we settle down to a half-hour talk on the new physics; it must be true, we heard it on the wireless.

I say then that the wireless not merely encourages us, from the nature of its machinery, to accept a common culture at second hand from the experts and semi-experts who are selected to talk to us; it predisposes us to listen attentively to anyone who will tell us that we live in a scientific age, and must perforce revise our views, not merely of nature but of human life, that we may be able to call them "scientific". This illusion will not persist; before long we shall accept the portable set as part of the conveniences of life no less than the telephone; it will be a scientific fetish no longer. But much may be done, in the meantime, to put the public mind under the control of the expert. Broadcasting has facilitated a process which, I readily grant, had already begun before wireless started, had already begun when printing became cheap and education universal—the creation of a new culture. The same sort of people who talk to us on the wireless write for us in the Press, publish books which we are expected to read; you cannot escape their influence by merely disconnecting. In the

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chapters which follow I am devoting my attention only to published works ; their compass is more manageable, and they were written, it must be supposed, at leisure and with a full sense of responsibility. I am proposing to consider the kind of culture which the public will absorb if it consents and continues to be broadcastminded, as it emerges in the works of the men who are its prophets. I am doing so with no desire to criticize the British Broadcasting Corporation for including their names in its programmes ; with no desire to intervene in any way in the frequent controversies which arise over its policy. I use the microphone rather as the symbol of a certain type of mentality ; the loud-speaker as the symbol of a certain attitude on the part of the general public. And if I should seem here and there to be picking a quarrel with a great monopoly, I am reassured by the reflection that its back is broad enough to sustain more formidable reproofs than mine.

II

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I SUPPOSE others besides myself, in reading the literature of a hundred and fifty years ago, especially Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, have been haunted by a regret. What distinguishes so prominently the culture of our age from the culture of theirs is simply the fact that it was possible then, but is not possible now, to have "culture" in the true sense at all. A man like Johnson, whose pursuits were literary and who loved to "tear the heart out of a book", was really in a position to read, as it came out, all the important work that was being done in politics, in scholarship, in travel, in philosophy, in science, in general literature, at least in his own language. He could read "Ossian", and form his own opinions; could consult Berkeley, instead of deriving some account of his system from *Petit Larousse*. To-day it is a man's job to know who was responsible for the late war, or what is happening in Russia; more than a man's job to understand the ramifications of modern economics; meanwhile, how are we to know all about the nature of the atom, the theory of space-time, the quarrels between Adler and Freud, the Polish Corridor, and the native problem in South Africa? Not to mention the novels. Before long

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an educated man will be one who can solve a cross-word puzzle without too frequent recourse to books of reference. They tell me that people who used to collect, a quarter of a century ago, the stamps of the whole world, have taken to specializing, and will only collect now the stamps, say, of the British Dominions. If philately has multiplied itself by fission in our time, so more unmistakably has knowledge. The expert to-day must be a specialist, in an admittedly narrow sphere.

It follows that we are all omniscientists now, at least in ambition. Unless we are of those few who can claim to know everything about something, it only remains that we should pride ourselves on knowing something about everything. We must all have recourse to the little handbooks sooner or later. And the people whom I am criticizing, whose methods I am questioning in this book, are not the people who derive their knowledge of most subjects from second-hand information; they do not differ in that from the rest of us; but people who select from the little handbooks those statements, those points of view which tell in favour of the thesis they want to establish, concealing any statements or points of view which tell in a contrary direction, and then serve up the whole to us as the best conclusions of modern research, disarming all opposition by appealing to the sacred name of science. It is these people I call the omniscientists.

It all began, in a sense, with Mr Wells's *Outline of History*. We knew Mr Wells for a man who could turn his hand to

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disease or in the general amelioration of the conditions in which we live, can lessen man's consciousness of the need he has for God. It reduces our sense of instability and dependence ; we no longer live under the threat of small-pox, for example, as our ancestors used to, and there is one disability less to humble us. If the anthropologists are right—the omniscientists, who generally accept their conclusions, are loth to follow them here—this contrast between the religious and the scientific outlook is very old indeed. It is the conflict between the priest and the magician, who is the rude forefather of the scientist. No doubt, when the priests were for claiming that the king's illness was traceable to non-payment of his temple-dues, the medicine-man, whose juju claimed to have cured him, was unpopular in ecclesiastical circles. As medicine emerged from quackery and built itself up on a firmer though still empirical basis, clerical opposition to science (*pace* Mr Wells) could no longer maintain itself ; you could not *want* humanity to be miserable in order that it might be religious. But the principle holds good ; the generality of men will be more keenly alive to the prospects of a future life in proportion as their prospects are uncertain in this. And in times like ours, when there is a general and steady advance in the conveniences of life, it is not to be wondered at if there is a tendency to forget God in the flush of human achievement.

I am not suggesting that this tendency will involve any permanent loss to religion. After all, the religious psychology which betakes itself to prayer only when volcanoes are

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that he is too busy talking about science to delay over such trifling matters. Meanwhile he contrives to insinuate that religion and science are necessarily incompatible; that everything, therefore, which he has said in praise of science is *ipso facto* a condemnation of religion. He will belittle Christianity by forced contrasts; now dwelling on the long "æons" which elapsed between the protoplasm and the appearance of Moses, now showing how ignorant and brutish the Middle Ages were by comparison with the civilization that dates from Darwin. He is the prophet of a new age, and he has the public ear. He astounds with outpourings of quaint scientific facts; he dazzles with glimpses of the incomprehensible. He creates the *impression* that religion is of yesterday, science of today.

The fallacy of this method, which is also the secret of its success, is that it represents the pressure of scientific knowledge upon religious apologetic as a constant pressure, like that of a tide gradually washing up round a sand-castle. In fact, the tide flows ~~here~~, ebbs there; and the religious hesitations of today are not those of yesterday; the ruling hypotheses have changed. But this can be concealed by the omniscientist, who can bring forth from his treasure things new and old. He represents the effect of the attack as cumulative, when in fact it fluctuates.

There is a sense, of course, and a very important sense, in which the progress of science does tend, progressively, to weaken the force of the religious appeal. The practical triumphs which it achieves, whether in the conquest of

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religion unsatisfactory, the biologists and anthropologists of today must, *a fortiori*, find them more unsatisfactory still. There is no *a fortiori* about it; the fact, if it is a fact, must be proved. And you certainly have not proved it when you have loudly called attention to the sensational discoveries of the modern physicists.

Thus, your omniscientist will write as if not merely the evolutionary theory, but the full Darwinian doctrine of Natural Selection were as much in favour as ever, though it is not. And these speculations will come cheek by jowl with bits of information so bewilderingly modern that you are expected to regard him as the latest oracle. Before you have had time to put a pencil-mark at the side of the page, he will have sailed off into a learned disquisition about the second law of thermodynamics, as if this put the last nail in the coffin of religion. But the second law of thermodynamics is not even in apparent conflict with any religious notion. What it does contradict, for what it is worth, is the notion that the universe either has existed from all eternity or will exist to all eternity; as Christianity does. Or, in another field, he will hand on to you Schweitzer's eschatological notions as if they were the latest thing in Biblical criticism; nor does it occur to the reader to reflect that Schweitzer's views are twenty years old; how should it, when the next paragraph is all full of the quantum-theory?

Nearly all the books which will be passed under review in the succeeding chapters convey the suggestion that

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active, or crops threatened, or health impaired, is not of the highest type. And I hope I shall not be considered unduly grateful for the blessings of science (which also come from God) if I say that we have not *quite* yet emerged into a Utopia which leaves no material favours to intercede for. I am only noting a shifting of emphasis in the point of view of the average worldly person, which may account for a certain falling off in external attachment to religious observances. I do not pretend that it goes anywhere near to touching the heart of our difficulties.

When we turn to the achievements of science in the realm of theory, the additions it has made to our knowledge, not to our comfort, we must abandon, if we are to view the facts candidly, this notion of a steady advance. I do not mean to make any cheap attack on the scientists for changing their opinions from time to time; changes of opinion are inevitable, where you are proceeding by methods of hypothesis and experiment, and a "discarded" hypothesis is not necessarily discredited because it has been superseded. It would be absurd to quarrel with Newton because he did not anticipate Einstein. No, I am quite willing to allow that, as hypothesis succeeds and ousts hypothesis, we are getting closer all the time to a true understanding of the nature of things. What I am quarrelling with is the assumption, half-consciously made, that each succeeding scientific hypothesis is more damaging to the credit of Christianity than the last; that, if the biologists of eighty years ago or the anthropologists of thirty years ago found the arguments for

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I shall have more to say about this kind of argumentation later ; for the present I will only summarize. I will only point out that, in the first place, you have no right to infer the probable success of one science from the assured success of another. For the subject-matter is different ; all the other sciences (unless you count anthropology) are dealing with facts external to man, whereas psychology hopes to invade the very castle of man's mind. And, in the second place, that if psychology should succeed in throwing doubt on *all* our mental processes, it would *ipso facto* throw doubt on its own, and fall into the intellectual suicide which is the inevitable fate of dogmatic scepticism. In any case, the future of apologetics may safely be left to the apologists of the future.

Here then you have a curious situation—that the moment is not really a good moment for attacking religion, on the intellectual side at least. It is too late to attack us here, too soon to attack us there ; the science of the actual moment is indifferent, sometimes in a capricious way friendly, to our claims. What is the reason for this conspiracy to harm us, more determined (I think) than any within our life-time ? And what are the methods by which it contrives to make its contentions plausible ? What is the gas-cloud under which it succeeds in masking a push made so inopportunately ?

As for the reasons, they are complex, and can only be sketched briefly here. We are now in the third generation of unbelief ; and a fairly considerable part of our intelli-

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science has won its battle against Christianity through the bold discoveries it has made during this century. As a matter of fact, with one exception, I find that all the arguments used against religion could have been used with equal confidence—some of them with more confidence—a hundred years ago. I say arguments; of course, there is a great deal of rank speculation which the researches of recent years have tended to encourage, about primitive man, for example, or the mystery religions; but it remains speculation merely. The only argument which is brought forward, based on any kind of modern research, which is new, is the psychological argument. It runs roughly like this: Nobody would have thought, a hundred years ago, that science would have been able to develop in this amazing way; that chemistry would be resolving itself into physics, and biochemistry threatening to bridge the gulf between the inorganic and the organic. How can we tell, then, what progress the new psychology, for it is quite new, will have made in a hundred years' time? At present, what Pavlov has to tell us relates only to our animal instincts; and Freud, although he has speculated about everything in heaven and earth, is chiefly listened to when he deals with the psychology of the abnormal. But others will follow in the same field; will verify, by patient statistics, the guesses of their predecessors, until there will be no choice of the human will, possibly no judgment of the human intellect, which cannot be set down as a wish-fulfilment or a conditioned reflex. And where will be your Christianity then?

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confuse him with the riddles of science, not to enlighten him with its lucidity ; so confused, will he be able any longer to trust his own judgment, to hold, therefore, any beliefs at all?

There is a well-known newspaper which contains, every week, an illustrated corner headed, "Did you know that . . . ?" ; a question followed by a series of facts, or alleged facts, selected rather because they are surprising than because they are important. Readers, apparently, like to be reminded in this way that their knowledge is limited. And the popularizers of science are inclined, nowadays, to go about their work in the same way, shooting out information at us with the desire rather to take our breath away than to make us, in any effective degree, wiser men. Thus I was asked not long ago by a Girl Guide to explain a statement made in some calendar issued to the members of her order, which ran as follows : "The rose has no colour of its own. The red which we see was in the sun ten minutes before, ninety million miles away. A red rose keeps the greens and blues of the prismatic colours, and reflects the red to us". I cannot imagine an utterance less calculated to enlighten, and more calculated to confuse, a girl of twelve. If the rose has no colour of its own, how can there be such a thing as a red, as opposed to a yellow, rose? There must be something "in", that is, proper to, this rose itself which makes us distinguish it as "red". And what is the use of bothering a child about the relations of light and colour, when everybody knows that in the last

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gentsia has grown up altogether without the influence of religion. But its success in indoctrinating the public mind with the principles of agnosticism has only been partial. The ordinary Englishman's attitude towards religion is wonderfully vague, and his tolerance of other people's immoralities almost inexhaustible ; but he has not given up, and shows no sign of giving up, the terminology and the outward symptoms of religious belief. This has set up, I think, a feeling of irritation in the prophets of the New Age ; they are disgusted to find the corpse still twitching. And they are disgusted equally with the reaction in intelligent circles against the propaganda of unbelief ; with scientists and philosophers who preach, amid the confusions of our modern thought, a return to earlier loyalties. It is this mood of exasperation which I find chiefly reflected in their writings ; more than a century since Darwin, and still there are Prayer-book debates, and a Vatican City!

The methods used are more interesting. I think it is true to say that " Science ", when it first began to argue self-consciously and to question older beliefs, hoped to dispel the foggy clouds of religious illusion by penetrating them with the clear light of reason ; only make the facts plain, impart to the man in the street the knowledge which lay at the disposal of the man in the laboratory, and the public would find itself too clear-headed, too sophisticated, to believe. The aim of the omniscientists is, as far as I can see, the opposite ; they want to convince the man in the street not of knowledge, but of ignorance. They want to

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to delegate the business of thinking to heads wiser than their own.

The omniscientists, after all, are not as a rule specialists. With an obvious exception in either case, you can say that the writers whom I am examining in this book know no more than the A.B.C. of philosophy, and perhaps only the B.B.C. of science. Nor are they always adepts at making their meaning clear ; Lord Russell, to be sure, and Mr Wells have a mastery of language, but the others, noticeably Mr Heard, often find it difficult to explain to the reader what they are talking about. Accordingly, they adopt the tactics of the cuttle-fish, which emits its ink not to enlighten but to confuse its pursuers. Long passages, which have no relevance to the matter in hand, can be explained only on this supposition. When Professor Huxley goes out of his way to tell us a lot about the habits of the Todas or the Crow Indians, we are not to suppose that he has, or pretends to have, a vast amount of first-hand knowledge on the subject. He takes his material, quite honestly, out of the books other men have written ; and if his object were merely to educate us, when we have read what he has to say we should know as much about the question as he does. But he is not trying to show us that he knows a great deal ; he is trying to show us that there is a great deal to be known of which we are lamentably ignorant. So with Mr Mencken, when he chats to us about the varieties of primitive religion ; so with Mr Heard, when he theorizes about the origin of tattooing. And Mr Davies is disarmingly frank ; as we

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philosophical analysis it is impossible to think of red either as something "in" the sun or something "in" the rose, or something "in" the person who looks at it? In any case, you are up against the insoluble mystery of the two factors in cognition. The statement is not calculated to enlighten the child, but to humble it with a sense of its own ignorance. Sometimes a useful thing to do, no doubt; but I wonder that the public at large does not find these efforts to confuse it rather exasperating.

I have seen a headline in a cheap paper which ran, MOTHER-LOVE IS MANGANESE. It appeared that somebody in America who kept rats had excluded manganese from their food, and found that the mother rats, under this treatment, showed no desire to nourish their children. Assuming the observations to be accurate, it was possible to say "Mother-love is an instinct which disappears when manganese is withdrawn", or "Mother-love is an instinct which depends on the presence of manganese in a creature's nourishment". But it is quite certain that mother-love, whatever it is, is not manganese, because they are two facts in two different orders of experience. The headline was not true, but it was put like that in order to arrest and to puzzle the reader; to give him the feeling that the world is an uncommonly odd place, and these scientific fellows know much more about it than you and I do. What the journalist does merely to awaken interest, the omniscientist does to produce a calculated effect. He wants to make his readers ashamed of their limited brain-power, and ready

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articles on Roman Britain—and that is the reason, no other, why the name is so familiar.¹ But as to what Biblical scholars of repute think or do not think, Mr Weigall, I take it, is no better authority than Professor Huxley is, or Mr Mencken himself. "Weigall says"; yes, it was hardly a case of deep calling to deep.

Another mark by which you may know the omniscientist is the preference which he shows for pre-history, as opposed to history. When you are writing about history there is always the chance that some reader will come along who can correct your facts; if you are Mr Mencken, it is almost certain that some reader will come along who can correct your facts. Whereas in pre-history you are perfectly safe; the area you cover is so vast, and the ascertainable facts about it are so scanty, that you can really put down pretty well what you like; people will be grateful to you for making the dry bones of palæontology live by the exercise of a little imagination. Mr Wells popularized the method in his *Outline of History*, and he has not been without followers. Mr Heard, in particular; I wonder he does not take to writing novels himself. His atmosphere is that of a *mésalliance* between *Tarzan* and *She*. We must not forget that, to a public whose tastes are formed by the cinema, a well-staged fake brings almost the same degree of conviction as the truth. And, of course, when the author

¹ Mr. Weigall has also written on Nero, Cleopatra, and Sappho. He assures us that the works of this poetess were burnt by the early Church. Says Weigall.

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shall see, he admits that the whole object of his book is to reduce the reader to a state of nescience, in which he will cease to feel certain of anything whatsoever.

Another trick of the omniscientist is to hint at the existence of important authorities in the background ; if we read So-and-so for ourselves, we should see how complicated this subject is, and how wise we are to be content with the extracts served up to us. Thus I was surprised to meet, both in Professor Huxley's *Religion without Revelation* and in Mr Mencken's *Treatise on the Gods*, a remark on the existing state of Biblical criticism prefaced by the rubric, " Weigall says ". The remark itself was wholly insignificant ; it was to the effect that no scholar of repute now believes in the literal sense of the Bible ; which may mean anything or nothing—it depends what you mean by a " scholar of repute," and it depends what you mean by " literal ". But it was the attribution of the dictum which bothered me ; I thought I used to know the names of all the people who were authorities on Biblical criticism, and the name " Weigall ", though it was somehow familiar to me, did not seem to belong to that list ; Weigall. . . . In the end I had recourse to *Who's Who*, and there found that Mr Weigall was, indeed, a member of my own University, but after a short residence joined Professor Flinders Petrie on the staff of the Egypt Exploration Fund. He has published various works on Egyptian antiquities, from which I suspect that Mr Heard has quarried extensively. Then he joined the *Daily Mail*—you remember those

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see, than Mr Mencken. The fact is, surely, that there have been two moments at which it looked as if the authority of the Bible was being impugned by the theories of the scientist. One was when the Copernican doctrine, with all its apparent defiance of common sense, was held inconsistent with a verse in the Psalms; the other was when Darwinism contradicted the doctrine of a sudden and separate creation of species. Of all the innumerable other scientific discoveries which have enriched our knowledge, I could never find that there was one which was stigmatized as doubtful on religious grounds. But these two instances are enough for the omniscientist. Any Catholic, like Mendel, who makes an important discovery is, for them, an unconscious traitor; any scientist, like Eddington, who admits the existence of God must be a hypocrite. And yet it is strange, surely, that if this inevitable hostility exists, it should be a hostility of which neither the Christian nor the scientist—the real scientist—is aware?

It is a curious circumstance, by the way, that although these writers are united in rejecting the claims of Christianity in general, or even of theism, they tend to identify "religion" with the Catholic Church to a degree which is surprising in a Protestant country, and would probably have been impossible thirty years ago. Mr Mencken, to be sure, still has his eye on the Elmer Gantries of his own country, because they provide such good sport for him. And Professor Huxley only singles us out when he is being rude. But in general it is the Catholic Church that is

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has developed his thesis by the time he has got down to Tutankhamen, the period Tutankhamen-to-Galileo can be made without difficulty to bear it out. Deal with history sufficiently in the large, and it is notorious that it will yield any moral you want it to.

Finally, your omniscientist always believes in the existence of an implacable hostility between religion as we know it, and "Science". An opposition of method; we Christians, it would appear, cannot forgive the physicist or the biologist for being inductive in his methods, not deductive, like the theologians. An opposition of aim; for whereas science wants to educate people, we want to keep them ignorant. An opposition of effects; for whereas science makes people free and happy, religion tends to make them discontented and oppressed. I confess that I am at a loss to diagnose the sources of this curious fanaticism; if I were of the moderns I suppose I should christen it a Galileo-complex, and leave it at that. We always start with Galileo; and the whole issue between him and his judges is written up as if it had been a final triumph of strength between the wicked old Church on the one side and the struggling pangs of conscious truth on the other. All this goes down very well, but one swallow does not make a summer. If Galileo's trial had been part of a repressive policy conducted against the advancement of the natural sciences, we should have expected to find other instances of the same process; but where? Our authors seem curiously at a loss; none more noticeably, as we shall

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the happiness of men, he wants us to work for the happiness of man ; a distinction which we shall have occasion to examine more closely. All the books criticize traditional religion not only for the improbability of its doctrines, but for the strictness of its morals. Mr Heard and Mr Davies, whom I suppose to be the youngest of the party, talk the language of determinism, and do not appear to leave us any morality at all.

If I have confined my considerations to so small a group of authors, it is not because there was any lack of others who might have been included in the same gallery—though perhaps with a little further variation of the type—but because I did not find it possible to deal with such writers in little space. They do not argue in syllogisms which can be answered with *concedo* and *nego*, or with dilemmas which can be rebutted ; they assert here, they suggest there, they insinuate there, they intertwine the threads of theory and fact so that no simple answer is possible ; you must tap every corner of the edifice to find out where it rings hollow. And if the reader finds this treatment heavy going, it is not altogether my fault. Let him try some of the originals.

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represented as the enemy ; Mr Heard seems hardly to be conscious of the existence of other Christianities, and Mr Langdon-Davies considers that it is unfair to call yourself a Christian unless you are resolutely opposed to birth-prevention. I wonder whether the struggle over birth-prevention is not responsible, in some measure, for this outburst of scientific wrath against Christianity, and against the Catholic Church in particular ; this insistence that the Christian and the " scientific " outlook are permanently at issue. Certainly it is true of all the omniscientists, without exception, that the struggle I have mentioned is never long absent from their minds ; with Mr Davies and Mr Wells it is a cardinal point in the whole controversy.

Meanwhile, what are they all getting at? Having abolished Christianity, what are they setting up in its place? They would not pretend, I take it, to any unanimity of view ; nor is there any reason why they should. Mr Huxley and Mr Wells want a religion without God. Mr Wells wants a scientifically run state. Lord Russell does not want a scientifically run state, but is afraid we shall get it. Mr Langdon-Davies wants happiness. Mr Mencken is doubtful whether happiness will survive the disappearance of religion, but thinks it possible that the superman of the future will be able to get on without happiness. Mr Heard has an idea that human history goes in cycles, and some periods are happier than others ; but it is difficult to imagine how any period could be happy if it believed in the doctrines of Mr Heard. Anyhow, if we cannot work for

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a happiness which we shall not have any consciousness to enjoy". I only wanted to point out to some of my fellow-Christians how close their tolerance was leading them to a position of pure agnosticism ; I did not really think that anybody would come forward from the other side and solemnly propose a universal religion in which the first clause of the creed should be dropped. Yet this is what Professor Huxley has done, in his book called *Religion without Revelation* ; and if a smattering of every conceivable subject except theology can qualify a man for such a task, his qualifications must be admitted.

The title disarms by its modesty. For religion without revelation, though it is a curious blind spot in Professor Huxley's make-up that he cannot recognize it, may nevertheless involve a belief in a spiritual world external to the mind of man. Most Unitarians are, I suppose, disbelievers or doubtful believers in revelation, if the word be used in its full historic sense ; the system of Kant borrowed nothing from revelation, though he professed not only a theology but an eschatology ; nor am I ready to suspect of mere conservatism those numerous fellow-countrymen of ours who retain at least a working belief in God and the future life, although they are no longer responsive to the Christian appeal. Professor Huxley goes much further than this ; as we shall see, religion for him is nothing more than an attitude ; and a frivolous reader might be pardoned for wondering whether " Religiosity without Reason " would not have been a more apt christening. But the whole

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THERE is a melancholy difference between the fate of the prophet and that of his disreputable brother, the satirist. For the prophet, though his fortunes be ruined and his world crashes about him, has at least the gloomy satisfaction of muttering, "I told you so". But the satirist, who also told them so, refuses to be comforted; not only are his worst dreams realized, but they have ceased to have value as satire; there is no escape for him, except the disingenuous pretence that he really meant it. It is now nearly twenty years since, moved by a contemplation of tendencies then at work among Christian leaders, I wrote a little tract entitled *Reunion All Round*; at the end of which, by way of a *reductio ad absurdum*, I suggested that the all-embracing Church of the future should find room, not only for the Mahommedans and Buddhists, but also for the atheists. I pointed out that we Christians had only one quarrel, after all, to patch up with the atheists, namely, as to whether God existed or not; and I concluded, as far as I remember, that in some future age we should all come to recognize a God "who exists, yet does not exist, causes sin, yet hates it, hates it, yet does not punish it, and promises us in heaven

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cism which refuses to take experience into account is to that extent an incomplete and therefore an erroneous interpretation of life.

This proof can take either of two forms. It may make a direct attack on the whole basis of intellectualism, urging that mere logic is not everything, that the heart has its reasons as well as the head, that religion is concerned not with one single faculty but with the whole man; "you come to me with your theories", says the believer, "which appear to leave no room for my convictions, but then, you see, I have had experience of the truths of my religion, and that experience is as real to me as if it were the evidence of my outward senses. If you produced theories which pretended to show that the cow is an extinct animal, so much the worse for your theories, because I have seen a cow. So here; I *know* that your theories must be wrong, because they make the capital mistake of sinning against observed fact". In its essence, this attitude is not so much an argument as a refusal to argue; and it is capable of use, not only against the opponents of religion but against the supporters of any particular system of religion which happens to be in contradiction to your own.

A more rationalized form of the same process is, however, possible; you may argue from the existence of religious feelings, instincts, susceptibilities, call them what you will, to the existence of some supernatural object or objects to which they will relate. Nothing in nature (so this form of the argument runs) is wholly useless; the existence of a

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direction of Professor Huxley's thought was determined, I fancy, by the special nature of the apologetic with which he is familiar. And here I must confess that I think certain would-be spokesmen of Christianity have given a handle to his optimism.

There has been, in recent years, a movement away from metaphysics among the defenders of religion. They know that an Englishman, though he is fond of an argument, is not fond of thinking; they know that disputes among Christians themselves about many points of theology have made it difficult to present a united front; they have been impressed, perhaps, by the modern worship of the *a posteriori*, and feel that theology, like the natural sciences, ought to be able to represent its first principles, at any rate, as data provided by experiment. To be sure, in matters of theology you cannot provide experiment in the strict sense, because the concrete subjects with which theology supposedly deals are *ex hypothesi* beyond the region of sense. But then, for the same reason, you cannot *expect* to be provided with experiment in the strict sense; there can be no progress in any department until you are prepared to recognize the nature of the proofs which are possible in that department. And accordingly, though these modern apologists cannot offer experiment in the sense of a test case which can come under the direct observation of their opponents, they are prepared to appeal to experience. Religious experience is, they claim, a real thing, a fact of observation; and the formal atheism or obstinate agnosti-

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that of psychology. It is as if we had pushed forward our line of defence at one particular point, only to find that that particular point had been enfiladed by the enemy's fire. It is characteristic of the new psychological method that it will not suffer the conscious mind to interpret its own feelings in the light of its inner experience; those feelings, we are told, only come to it in a predigested form as the result of their passage through the subconscious, and who shall say how the concoctive heat of that organ may have transubstantiated them? If, for example, a strong antipathy to something felt in the subconscious mind can appear in the conscious mind as a fixed conviction that that thing does not exist, how easily we may be mistaken about all our self-analysis! The much-abused medievals had the ambition of finding out some process by which metals could be transmuted; and in particular by which the baser metals could be transmuted into gold. We moderns, whose economic tendencies have introduced such confusion into finance that it seems as if only the discovery of the process in question could extricate us from our embarrassments, find this medieval delusion highly diverting; though it is difficult to see what grounds our scientists have for criticizing the quest, except that it was unsuccessful. Nowadays it is rather the transmutation of spiritual values that dwells in our ambitions. Having classified and pigeon-holed the various phobias and inhibitions which supposedly give rise to abnormal nervous conditions—without, so far, any very conspicuous success in curing the maladies—we

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faculty therefore implies the existence of something upon which it can find its proper exercise. The blind men in Mr Wells' imaginary country did wrong when they wanted to put out the eyes of their strange visitor ; they should have known, even though they were incapable of sharing his experience, that this (to them) unknown organ must have a possible avenue of experience corresponding to it. So, in ethics, the phenomenon of conscious will proves that right and wrong must have an objective value ; if choice were limited to a mere adaptation of means to material ends, the faculty in us which criticizes action as right or wrong would be a waste faculty altogether. Take the process a stage higher ; there is something in us which demands, and finds satisfaction in, the act or at least the attitude of worship. But, since there is nothing in the visible creation which has a dignity corresponding to that attitude, we may be very sure that there is more in existence than our visible creation contains ; some kind of spiritual order there must be, beyond sense, towards which our faculty of worship is properly related as to its object. An impetus has been given to this kind of argument by Otto's treatise on " the holy " ; his newly-coined adjective, " numinous ", has had a profound influence on religious thought ; and a profound influence, as we shall see, on Professor Huxley's thought also.

The chief practical danger of this apologetic method—of my feelings about its real value this is not the place to speak—is that it lies open to attack from a very modern angle,

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straightforward to me"; "It may turn out that the majority of Freud's detailed conclusions are false"; "To these . . . agencies Freud has given the very unsatisfactory name of the censor" (pp. 108, 169, 265, 275). Professor Huxley has the greatest admiration for Freud, but he never mentions him, it seems, except to disagree with him. And no wonder; for, as we shall see, Professor Huxley likes things to fit into his scheme, and the Freudian attack on religion does not. Freud wants to have the tooth out by the roots; it is Professor Huxley's chief ambition to perpetuate the functioning of the nerve.

Religion without Revelation will have nothing to do with underestimating the value of the religious emotions. Rather, their unique value is central to its philosophy. And, indeed, at one point the author goes out of his way to reassure those who might feel that psychology has stultified our confidence in our own felt experiences. "To understand the machinery of this or that experience of the religious life is not to strip it of value. At first blush it may seem as if to accept the psychological account of inspiration, for instance, to believe that inspiration represents the inflow into consciousness of thoughts and feelings that had been fermenting in the subconscious, instead of believing that it was the authentic voice of God, was to disvalue it. On reflection, however, it is seen that the sense of disappointment is due only to the intellectual views which you may have previously held about theology" (p. 316). There is no doubt that he has caught the modernist's phrases to the

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proceed to apply the same analysis to emotions hitherto regarded as primary and natural. If patriotism, ambition, moral indignation, the love of natural beauty, etc., can be shown to be misinterpreted echoes from the consciousness of childhood, based in the last resort on sexual perversion or wounds in the tender centres of our nervous system, then indeed we shall have gone far towards unifying our experience. True, existence itself may 'take on less dazzling colours when we have learned thus to re-read our values. But that will be the sacrifice made, as sacrifices must ever be made, on the altar of Truth—if indeed Truth itself has not by that time been reduced to a neurosis with the rest of them.

There is little doubt that the religious sense will be one of the first things which the new psychology will thrust into the crucible. Religion has so filled the world with its presence, taken on so many strange and so many unattractive forms—Professor Huxley is alive to all that—linked itself so intimately with many of our other feelings and judgments, that we shall have simplified everything enormously when we have pinned it to the card. Indeed, Freud himself has not been slow to point the way in this direction, and it is certain that he will have eager followers. Professor Huxley, perhaps for this precise reason, shows a want of tenderness for Freud, otherwise difficult to account for. "Freud tells us that the father-complex . . . etc. ; it may be so, but . . ."; "Freud believes that the reason why . . . etc. The matter, I confess, does not seem so

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the time, that you felt Somebody, near you ; it was almost as if you were being supported, resting in Somebody's Arms. If you had been one of the mystics, with a still finer sensibility, you might even have thought that you heard a Voice encouraging you. Now, nobody denies the fact of your experience. There was, there really was, an inflow into consciousness of thoughts and feelings that had been fermenting in the subconscious. But that process represented itself to you under symbols, like the symbols we use in dreams. Your religious training (or possibly something deeper in you than that) supplied them readily enough. Only, there was nobody there".

At that point, probably, the disputants would reach a deadlock. It is not easy to convince a man that his awareness has been at fault. But a third party, standing by, who is in no position to judge of another's interior conviction, will probably take sides with Professor Huxley—at least if he is one of those who are impressed by the new psychology. And now, what answer will be given to the other champion of "experience", who claims that there can be no smoke without fire, and no faculty without an object?

Once more, I do not think it is difficult to see what line Professor Huxley will take. He will agree that there is such a thing as the religious sense, and that it has a permanent value. But (he will ask), is it necessary that every sense should have a specific object? After all, even the five senses of the body give us access to the same reality, although they approach it in different ways. And when we betake our-

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life ; no satirist could have done it better. But one is conscious of a faint uneasiness about his attitude ; he feels that you must draw the line somewhere.

Professor Huxley is not fond of crossing swords with his theological opponents, contenting himself for the most part with the statement of his own convictions. (Indeed, he very seldom makes a quotation which is not intended to support his own point of view.) But I think it is easy to see on what lines he would meet the argument from "experience" as I have tried to state it above. He will not accuse me of misrepresenting him if I outline his reply as follows, though I am not as "full of modern instances" as he would be. "Yes," he will say to the man who claims that his own experience is valid for himself, "I do not doubt its validity for a moment. All I call in question is the conscious interpretation which you put upon it. Nothing is more clearly brought out by Freud and his followers than the fact that the human mind automatically catches at symbols. Thus, if the top button of your pyjamas has been sewn on too tight, so that you cannot breathe freely in sleep, you dream about it. You dream, perhaps, that you are on the front lawn, being strangled by a boa-constrictor. Or, at any rate, that is all you remember of the matter when you wake up. The sensation of being strangled was something real ; objective tests can assure us of that. But the boa-constrictor was a symbol conjured up by your imagination to represent the sensation to yourself. So with your religious experiences. You think, perhaps you thought at

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opening on this world, instead of a skylight giving on the next?

I shall have more to say later on about this form of argumentation ; here I am only presenting it to show that it does, *prima facie* at least, counter the objections of a whole school of modern apologetic, the school which tries to base the reality of the spiritual world on the reality of our attitude towards it. Meanwhile, is Professor Huxley quite ignorant that other proofs have been suggested by other minds, purporting to show that a supernatural world exists? Such ignorance cannot be attributed to him. He tells us that there are three schools among those who believe in the existence of God. " One may simply point to the revelation of Scripture . . . or one may attempt the philosophical approach, the definition by metaphysics. . . . The third method of approach . . . consists in the refusal to accept authority as such, in an insistence upon the study of facts, and upon inductive reasoning from the facts " (pp. 137-139). It is clear that the division last mentioned includes Professor Huxley himself: includes, too, those prophets of " experience " whose contentions we have just been considering. And now, what of the other two schools?

I suppose there may be people in the world who accept the doctrine of God's existence on the strength of the revelation made by Scripture, and on that alone. I have never met them. Good Catholics they certainly cannot be, for the Vatican Council was careful to stigmatize even the more rational systems, Fideism and Traditionalism, which

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selves to the world of ideas, we find the same lesson still more plainly forced upon us. The moral sense (if you like to call it that) has as its subject-matter only the common events of everyday life. The moral agent sleeps, wakes, eats, drinks, walks, does his work, earns his living; he would have to do the same, even if his moral sense were suddenly taken away from him. Morality is not concerned with doing special things, but with doing things in a special way; he who does them "as for thy laws makes that and the action fine". Why, then, should the religious sense postulate a whole new spiritual order, outside our common experience, as the sphere of its operations? Why should not the religious sense, too, be concerned with natural things given to us in our experience, and with these alone? That will not mean that the religious sense has no value; it, in its turn, is a fresh way of approaching our experience, a fresh way of regulating our attitude towards it. It is not even true, if you come to think of it, that our religious emotions do not attach themselves, sometimes, to the things of earth. *Σέβας μ' ἔχει ἐισαρόωντα*, "awe comes upon me as I behold thee", people say to one another in Homer; and what is awe but the specific attitude of religion? Most of us know it—that beating of the pulses and intake of the breath which accompanies, for example, some sudden meeting with the very great. So Dr Johnson must have felt, that day in the Royal Library, when he found himself in danger of bandying words with his Sovereign. Why cannot the religious sense be a new window

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appeal for a moment to any revelation, in Scripture or out of it, for the purpose. Which makes it all the more extraordinary that Professor Huxley, in demolishing the whole edifice of theism, makes no reference to the Five Proofs, and shows no consciousness that they have ever been urged. He has heard of Paley, apparently,¹ and makes fun of his argument from design, with a confidence which would be better justified if the champions of natural selection had managed to get rid of adaptation altogether; and it is presumably from the same author that he gets the deistic notions stigmatized on the following page (p. 85). But when he characterizes the God of Deism, the Winder-up of a mechanical universe, as "much more shadowy, far, and remote than the God of the Middle Ages", I wonder whether he has the slightest idea what he is talking about? Certainly his acquaintance with St Thomas can hardly be intimate.

He is, however, conscious (for Balliol bred him) that there were some metaphysicians in the nineteenth century who talked about the Absolute. And it is of these he is thinking, not of the centuries of philosophy which preceded them, when he recognizes the existence of a second "way of approach"—that by way of metaphysics. "The Absolute" he evidently regards as a philosophic after-thought, unfairly brought in at the last moment to stabilize the credit of Theism just when it is in danger of collapse.

¹ Mr Langdon-Davies, as we shall see, also takes his notions of traditional Christianity from this strongly "dated" author.

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have some kinship with such a position ; that position itself was evidently too illogical to have anathemas wasted on it. " One true God and Lord can be known with certainty by the natural light of human reason by means of the things that are made "—thus did the Church reassert after nineteen centuries a conviction which she had taken over from the Jews, a people, as their literature shows, penetrated with the idea of God's government in the natural order. I gravely doubt whether Professor Huxley has any notion of all this, for I cannot discover that he is conversant with Catholic literature. His attitude is rather that of the character in *The Man who was Thursday* who knew all about Christianity because he had read it up in *Religion the Vampire* and *Priests of Prey*. Writing of monotheism (strictly so called) on p. 235, he says " It can no longer be maintained that the Jews were the only or even the first people on whom this noble idea dawned ". But why should they be? Or who wanted them to be? The noble idea is one which the human reason, if undistorted by superstitious notions, ought to arrive at for itself. That is our whole point.

It is true, of course, that the postulate of God as a Creator was an idea which became *précisé* in the Christian Church in proportion as philosophy was studied. It is correspondingly true that different levels of intellect, even now, appreciate the intricacies of a metaphysical argument with more or less of subtlety. But the whole traditional theology of Europe presupposes the Five Proofs, or some modification of them, as the basis of belief in God, and does not

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really matters in the discussion, though our author's references make no allusion to it, is whether we regard the Absolute as a conscious Entity or not. If the Absolute is conceived (though I never can imagine how some have thus conceived it) as having no conscious existence, then indeed we might be inclined, with Professor Huxley, to shelve as irrelevant to our purposes the question whether it exists at all. But if the Absolute is a conscious Being, then a God of some kind exists, and Professor Huxley's well-meant endeavours to provide a religion without him are so much waste paper.

Nor do I see that it makes the smallest difference whether the Absolute, so conceived, exhausts the full definition of the theological term "God". I am not going to discuss with Professor Huxley "the rich, vivid, and compelling experience of divinity which is enjoyed by many religious persons", because to the best of my belief I never had it. But, granted that the Absolute as defined by philosophers is no more like a mystic's understanding of God than a formula is like the reality it represents—than the formula of red on the spectroscope, let us say, is like the experience of red—why should it be? You might as well complain that Mars as defined by astronomers is not a bit like the Mars experienced by a man who has actually been there. What does it matter whether it is like, so long as it is the same?

For a moment, it looks as if this point were going to be considered; allowance is made for the possibility that the metaphysical God may be "identical with the God of the

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He complains (p. 51) of philosophers who assert "that the ground of all reality and existence is wholly spiritual, which hypothetical ground, then christened Absolute, is inserted from above through the philosophical trapdoor as a substitute for the God built up by religion or by quite other methods and out of quite other aspects of reality. I feel strongly that this *deus ex machina* of certain philosophies is a dummy God, no more like the rich, vivid, and compelling experience of divinity which is enjoyed by many religious persons than is shadow like substance, or than is a formula like the reality which it partially represents". And so here (p. 138) his objection "to all the metaphysical approaches to Deity which have ever been made is that the God which they claim to reveal . . . has no relation with the various Gods or aspects of God which humanity . . . has actually worshipped".

Now, this is reasoning which for the life of me I cannot follow. It reminds me of our housekeeper at Shrewsbury, who told the knife-and-boot boy that "the gentlemen would rather have no boy at all than a bad boy". So Professor Huxley, it appears, would rather have no God at all than a God who, he suspects, falls short of 100 per cent. divinity. But the quest of the Ultimate is not, he should be reminded, like the search for a lost hat in a theatre, when we indignantly refuse the proffered substitute as "not the one we lost". If the Sicilian peasant or the Baptist negro is not conscious of worshipping the Absolute, does that prove that the Absolute does not exist? Of course, what

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to which we should have come can have no influence on the facts, then it is our duty to suspend judgment and hold no belief". It will be instructive to examine the two operative clauses here; "when there is no evidence", and "when the conclusion can have no influence".

There is no evidence, or "next to no evidence", for him of God's existence. May we turn the question round by asking him what conceivable kind of evidence could exist which would have any weight with him, except the metaphysical evidence which he refuses to examine? Unless, indeed, a miracle were performed under his eyes, especially for his benefit. He hears of miracles, and immediately rules them out, not on historical evidence, but as intrinsically impossible. He is told of people whose whole lives are based on something which seems to them a direct consciousness of God, and he tells them that he has had much the same sort of experience himself, but it is only an inflow from the subconscious. What kind, what order of evidence remains conceivable, except such as is derived from the very facts of existence as we know them; from the order, for example, which our minds find in the universe, and assuredly did not put there? And when we press that evidence, we are told that Professor Huxley is bored by metaphysics.

"The conclusion"—that is, the supposed existence of a God—"can have no influence on the facts". Now, this was honest enough language for the downright old Agnostics of his grandfather's time. For them, the business of religion was to make people good; they would

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common men's religion". But what is our author's comment on the possibility? "There would still remain such a huge unbridged gap between the two aspects of the one truth that the problem can scarcely be regarded as much nearer solution than before". Yes, but *what* problem? The problem of God's existence, *An Deus sit*, or the problem of his nature, *Quid Deus sit*? The latter problem, indeed, may only have been partially tackled. But the problem of God's existence, in the case supposed, is not merely "nearer solution"; it is solved. And if God exists at all, whatever questions as to his nature remain over for discussion, it is at least certain that he has the first claim on our capacities of worship, before we start lavishing them, as Professor Huxley wants us to lavish them, on sunsets and sonatas in B.

The reasons for this curiously off-hand attitude are not far to seek. He is by tradition and deliberate preference an Agnostic; and if he urges us to throw ourselves into the conditions of a godless world with all the fervour of Christian mystics, that is because he clings to a godless creed with all the ardour of a Christian fanatic. He himself lays down for us the canon of Agnosticism on p. 28. After explaining that there are certain practical crises in life which make it necessary for a man to act upon an unconfirmed hope or suspicion, because he is in a hurry and action of some kind is imperative, he points out that this principle does not apply except in the given conditions. "When there exists no evidence, or next to no evidence, and when the conclusion

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him. And what Professor Huxley tries to do is not to show us that God is non-existent. He only tries to show us that if God did not exist there are good grounds for thinking that we should have invented him all the same.

And in doing this he has to call in the aid of sciences not his own ; chiefly of historical criticism, of anthropology, and of psychology. These three do not belong to the order of pure sciences, like mathematics, in which neither observation nor experiment is necessary, but the results, for what they are worth, are guaranteed by deductions from your premisses. Nor yet do they belong to the order of empirical sciences, like biology, where you must derive your theories from observation, and then verify them by experiment. You cannot experiment, properly speaking, in matters of historical criticism, because your facts lie in the past ; you can only make fresh observations, and the volume of possible fresh observations diminishes with research. Nor yet in anthropology, for you cannot isolate man in the mass and put him under the microscope. Nor yet in psychology, because the human mind cannot be seen working under test conditions except when it is reduced to an abnormal state ; by drugs, for example, or by hypnotism. Accordingly, all the more important suggestions made in these fields are, and must remain, untested hypotheses ; they are displaced, when they are displaced, by fresh theories based on observation, not by a strict method of proof. All the conclusions are tentative ; a fact which Professor Huxley recognizes, as we have seen, when he is dealing with

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be good, then, they would behave as if God existed, and by thus behaving they would absolve themselves from any duty of discovering whether he existed or not. But our epigonus, Professor Huxley the Second, means by religion something quite different from that. He concedes the point that, quite apart from our moral experience, there is a specifically religious experience which has an undeniable value of its own. And it is notorious that those who share this experience normally refer it to some kind of supernatural order, existing beyond the reach of sense. It is Professor Huxley's contention that these people should alter their perspective, and find a new focus for their devotion. They ask why they may not continue to believe in a God, and they are told that Professor Huxley is bored by metaphysics.

"Idle speculation", he calls it. I wonder if it has ever occurred to him that the refusal to speculate may be a mark of idleness? Truth is not, as the moderns conceive it, a mere negative thing, a mere absence of inaccuracy. It is something that deserves by its own right to be found and to be held. It has crowns which are refused to the incurious.

We shall be disappointed, then, if we expected that Professor Huxley would be at pains to stop all the earths of supernaturalism before he raised his Tally-ho in pursuit of the New Religion. His aim, after all, was more modest. Napoleon is credited, I think, with the aphorism that if there had not been a God, it would have been necessary to invent

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heathen and of the Christian religions, while you conceal the differences. Thus, when we have been told that the Todas add a fresh supply of milk to the remains of the sacred milk left over from yesterday, we are expected to compare this with the sacred fire of the Vestal Virgins, and the necessity for the ordination of priests by a bishop. "A natural symbolism is mistaken for sacred supernatural power, and this is mere magic" (p. 192 and footnote). Now, all three ceremonies have one thing in common, the notion of *sacred continuity*. But the notion of magic is the notion that preternatural power inheres in certain natural things as such, *e.g.*, in the seventh son of a seventh son. Whereas the notion that God can use material things as the instruments of sanctification, with the performance of a certain ceremony by a certain minister, is not magic; it is only allowing to God the liberty we should allow to an earthly monarch. And if the Todas believe that a certain power resides in the milk intrinsically, and operates through it automatically, that is magic. But there is no such Catholic belief about the laying on of hands. Again (p. 193) we are told that the Todas usually omit all appeals to the deities or spirits, "but the long list of magical adjurations which precede them are repeated with the utmost exactitude". And this our author proceeds to compare with the use of praying-wheels by the Tibetans, adding that "the same is true, though the case is not quite so extreme, when the mere gabbling of so many Ave Marias or Paternosters is supposed to be a religious act of spiritual value to the performer". Here, all three

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Freud, because he does not altogether agree with him. Does he always show a similar restraint?

For a man who has announced (p. 24) that "it is always undesirable and often harmful to believe without proper evidence", he evinces an extraordinary credulity. The speculations of a Frazer, a Reinach, or a Conybeare are constantly presented to us, not as the best results hitherto attained by careful scholarship, not as the latest bulletin from G'lozel, but uniformly as ascertained fact. That "in all probability the Lord's Supper could never have become the centre of Christian ritual without the numerous similar Greek rites that were its forerunners", that no Psalms were written before the Captivity, that the Fourth Gospel derives its doctrine of the Logos directly from Philo (pp. 228, 237, 70), are suggestions which no responsible author should have made without qualifying them by the admission that scholars are fallible. But we have no space to criticize here Professor Huxley's use of his authorities. We must pass it by with a note of mild wonder, and proceed to consider his conclusions on the assumption that his premisses are valid.

It might appear at first sight as if the interminable section on anthropology, nearly one-fifth of the whole book, was only meant to poke fun at religion in general, and at the Catholic religion in particular, by the "comparative method" which has been popularized by Frazer. The formula of this method is quite simple; it consists in emphasizing the resemblance between various aspects of the

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personifying tendency and its results. . . . There also exists a psychological reason to the same effect. Personality is the category most easily understood by man, since he himself has personality. . . . And there is, finally, the merely negative but still real difficulty of conceiving personality even remotely like our own, not in association with a material brain ”.

It is observable that this last “difficulty” is never discussed in the book at all. Once again our author fights shy of metaphysics. Or possibly he reflected that he was writing for ordinary people, and that to the ordinary person it is much more of a difficulty to understand how personality functions in association with a material brain than to understand how it could function without one. The fact that mind and brain are interconnected is a fact given in experience ; but *how* they are interconnected is not merely difficult to understand ; it is simply, to our human powers, unintelligible. But the rest of the programme is duly, if untidily, implemented. Anthropology is to show us that man has a tendency, in religion, to personify. The history of religion is to show us that civilized man tends to modify those early, too anthropomorphic, guesses. And psychology is to show that this tendency to personify is native to us.

“The readiness”, we are told (p. 47) “with which he (man) indulges in personification is seen today exemplified in various facts of psychology. Many cases of automatic writing and automatic speaking, of visions and auditions, have been recorded and investigated. In almost every case

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ceremonies have a notion in common, that of *repetition*. But the argument against the practise of the Todas is that they use magical spells instead of appeals to the deity, which is precisely not true of the Catholic usage. And the argument against the practise of the Tibetans is that they think of prayer as having an automatic value, independent of any exertion on the part of the worshipper, and this again is precisely not true of the Catholic usage. It will be observed that the point of comparison in these cases is always different from the point at which the heathen usage lays itself open to criticism. But by a perfectly dishonest use of suggestion the reader is somehow left with the impression that Fetishism, Paganism, Buddhism, and Christianity are all one thing.

However, a more careful consideration will convince us that the excursus on Comparative Religion is not merely designed to gratify Professor Huxley's fanatical hatred of the Catholic Church. It is intended to form part of, and to document, a piece of reasoned argument; and the lines of that argument are laid down on pp. 45 *seqq.* "What grounds are there", he writes, "for denying that this is so?" (that is, for denying that the history of religion is the history of a progressive discovery of the attributes and activities of a supernatural Being). "They are numerous and complex. . . . In the first place comes the undoubted fact that man at most levels of culture has a strong penchant for personification. . . . There is the equally undoubted fact of the gradual limitation during historical time of the

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up a river, and observe that the force which he exerts is being resisted by a force which he cannot control, and for which he is not responsible. He may conclude that the river is a being, or that there is a being who somehow is behind the river and lends it its force, or that there is a Being from whom this and all other forces take their origin. Probably his inference takes a form which is wrong, or at least inadequate (though not as inadequate, I think, as the shout from Professor Huxley's megaphone on the bank which tells him that it is only the Law of Gravitation). But there is nothing psychological about it; the process of thought would have been just as clear to us if Freud had died in infancy. The appeal to psychology has really added nothing to the argument whatever.

We turn, then, for corroboration to the historical argument. Professor Huxley appeals, I suppose, to the efforts made by men like Amos in Palestine or Plato in Greece to purify contemporary ideas about the nature of God. Amos insists that God is not the tribal God of Israel, but the Ruler of the whole earth; Plato derides the idea that a divine being can be subject to human passions or show human weaknesses. As you read history (this is, I imagine, his argument) you can watch theology in the process of becoming less childish. Now, I am afraid, I do not see eye to eye with Professor Huxley over all this. He has been reading up the authors who insist on regarding Amos as the father of Hebrew literature, which seems to me profoundly bad criticism; and I have not a moment's doubt that Amos was

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in which the possessor of these gifts has not been an educated and critically-minded person, it is found that he or she tends to think of them as produced from a separate and external personality, although there may be no question but that this is pure illusion". Professor Huxley goes on to speak of the "controls" with which mediums claim to be in touch; he describes the error as "easily fallen into and obstinately believed in". Now, what does all this come to? Why, that an ignorant person, finding (say) that her hand is writing fluent Greek although she has never learned the Greek alphabet, makes the deliberate inference that some other mind, not her own, must have guided the pen. But this is not due to any psychological impulse at all. It is a piece of perfectly cold-blooded reasoning; incorrect, as Professor Huxley and I think, but reasoning all the same. After all, she already believes or is inclined to believe in immortality and the existence of spirits, otherwise why should she be playing those games at all? Naturally, she attributes these odd results to the influence of personalities already believed in; it is common human calculation.

Naturally, we are in the habit of inferring the presence of other beings, not ourselves, when we are confronted with something—a noise, for example—not of our making. If the sole of your shoe has unexpectedly come loose and flaps as you walk down a dark passage, you may easily be led to infer that you are being followed. But did we need psychology to tell us that? And has it got anything to do with psychology? Similarly, I suppose, a savage may paddle

IV

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VENDITATION is the characteristic activity of our age. Ease of manufacture has led, long since, to over-production, each firm trying to produce a world-supply of its own goods, in the hope that its own goods will be bought in preference to those of its rivals. And now the harassed artificer, finding himself left with stocks of unsaleable goods on his hands, must run for aid to the advertiser, in the hope that he will be able to put things right. The advertiser began in a humble way, as a medium between consumer and producer, to signify where and at what price certain goods could be bought. When competition was in full swing he reaped a harvest by crying one man's goods against another's. Now he performs a still more important economic function by trying to persuade us that we ought to buy goods which as a matter of fact we do not need. Opticians shout at us, to tell us that we are going blind, tooth-paste firms, that we are in the grip of pyorrhœa, memory-trainers, that we are in danger of losing our jobs; a categorical imperative that brooks no question tells us we ought to drink more milk (an under-consumed article in these days when children are rare), to eat more fruit, and to season the primitive meal

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trying to restore, not to introduce, a purer notion of theology. I would say the same of Plato; it seems to me impossible to read the *Iliad* through without the strong impression that Zeus, as represented in it, is the god of a monotheistic religion which has been badly overlaid with later polytheistic corruptions. But even if we granted that Amos and Plato were innovators, what precise bearing has that on the argument in hand? Even if we suppose that theology was, in its beginnings, monstrosly anthropomorphous, and was becoming less and less so from Homo Sinensis down to the Christian era, or down to the present time, does that prove anything about the origins of religion? Does it help us in any way to determine how man first came to conceive that the universe was ruled by supernatural powers, or with what justice?

I am sorry to say it, but it seems to me that on a candid view Professor Huxley's "numerous and complex" grounds for dissenting from the theistic position reduce themselves to one, and that a comparatively simple one. "Man at most levels of culture has a strong penchant for personification". We are to go to anthropology, and learn from it how a perception of sacredness in things led the ignorant savage to hypothecate a deity or deities in, behind, or above those things. And this contention is so closely bound up with Professor Huxley's whole view of religion and his well-meant proposals for re-establishing it, that it will be best to consider it while we are considering them under the heading of a separate chapter.

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the noble savage lived ; that if man became carnivorous, it was only when, in some fit of make-believe, he invested animal life with the qualities that properly belong to vegetables. If we substitute fetishism for vegetables, and theism for meat, this is, as we shall see, almost the exact analogue of Professor Huxley's position. To St Paul, milk was for babes, meat for grown men. A later prophet would have the race develop into a glorious second childhood, to slobber with toothless gums over the spiritual dietary of the savage.

This is, you may say, the main plank in his platform ; that mankind began by having a religion without any god, and the idea of God was a corruption which crept in later. He rebukes two anthropologists and a well-known writer on religious psychology for defining religion as if it involved an attitude towards spiritual beings. And if we suggest that after all they might be expected to know their own business, he has his answer ready : Buddhism "in its original and purest form does not profess belief in any supernatural being" (p. 34). So far, he clearly has not proved much. For he begs the whole question when he assumes that Buddhism "in its original and purest form" should properly be called a religion, and not rather a philosophy built up against the structure of an existing religion, much as Christian Science has been built up against the structure of Christianity. It is, surely, in its less original and less pure form, *i.e.*, when it is contaminated with Brahminism, that it assumes the true stature of a

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with a suitable quantity of mustard. The perplexed consumer is almost driven to imagine that it is his duty to impair his eyesight in order that he may need more spectacles, and to fortify his digestion with ever larger doses of patent medicines, lest he should fail in his civic obligation of reducing the milk-surplus.

In short, whereas an earlier generation told us that happiness consisted in the fewness of man's needs, our own slinks about, encouraged by a thousand hoardings to need something it does not even care for. And I wonder whether we cannot see some approach to the attitude of the modern advertiser in the pathetic urgency with which Professor Huxley implores us to try his new religion, too preoccupied, almost, to consider the question whether we are satisfied with the religion we have got. It is as if a manufacturer of crutches were to follow us through the street assuring us that we are lame, that we are limping; and if we doubt that we are limping, we ought to try his latest crutch, and find out for ourselves that we should walk with it just as easily as we walk without it. It will not be his fault if the supply fails to create a demand.

Or, rather, let us draw the parallel a little closer, and say that he resembles a fruit-merchant, convinced as to the value of his wares. He has read up some authorities on the subject, and finds reason to hold that man was originally a vegetarian. His task thus becomes simplified; by dwelling on the nutritious quality of his fruit he can establish a probability—he thinks of it as a certainty—that it was thus

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that one who writes on anthropological matters ought to keep more clearly in view the distinction (which he himself recognizes) between "positive" and "negative" sacredness. But even if we admit that the cow comes to be held a proper object of worship, there is a virtue in that phrase "comes to be". Professor Huxley, when he uses it, is conscious that an attitude towards the cow has developed out of an attitude towards something else. And the whole point at issue is, What is that something else? What is the proper object around which the idea of "numinousness" ought to cling, and did cling in the first instance? In short, let us leave Buddhism and Brahminism, highly developed religions, alone; let us get back to the really primitive.

On pp. 243 and following there is some attempt made to give the reader a consistent account of how religion evolved. "At the base comes the stage in which the main object of religious feeling is mysterious or supernatural power, not usually personified, but conceived of as residing *in* particular objects and events. . . . The theological side of religion is therefore represented by mere rationalisation in the form of myths, often of a vague and fluid nature. . . . The next main level is one on which the mysterious power is generally conceived of as not *in* but *behind* objects and events. This is almost always combined with the personification of the different aspects of the power as supernatural but more or less manlike beings. . . . At the next level, general ideas have begun to make morality reasoned and to link this reasoned morality with religion. . . . The most familiar

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religion. And, in any case, the history of Buddhism is no better evidence about man's primal religious instincts than the history of Positivism. So far he has only proved at best that religion can be independent of theology, not that it is antecedent.

He continues, therefore: "As numerous workers on primitive religion testify, feelings essentially and obviously religious may be evoked in reference to an undefined sense of spiritual power or sanctity inhering in objects such as fetishes, or events such as death, without linking them up with any belief in any spiritual being" (p. 34). Yes, but we must press the point—does man refer such religious notions to natural objects or events *before* he has ever learned to refer them to supernatural objects or events? For if not, we shall be justified in retorting that the religious notion attaches itself in the first instance to supernatural things, and only comes to be applied to natural things by false analogy. If you meet a childless woman who lavishes her affection on a pet dog, that does not prove that mother-love is an emotion which has children and dogs equally for its object. The woman who finds herself childless, the man who finds himself godless, may devise a "compensation" for the frustrated instinct; need there be any more to it than that?

"All sorts of things and ideas not in themselves calculated to arouse the religious emotion do, as a matter of fact, come to be held sacred by this or that religion, as cows by the Hindu". Quite so. It might be pointed out, indeed,

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sustained argument ; but we are accustomed by now to fishing about for ourselves in the effort to catch the drift of his thought. Here are some paragraphs on the Todas, for example, clearly indebted to Dr Rivers's well-known work. They give us a chatty account of the curious ceremonies connected with the sacred buffalo-milk, around which, we are told, " for all practical purposes their religion centres ". Good ; these Todas, then, will provide an instance of a primitive people, so primitive that they have not yet evolved any theology at all. But no ; " they possess a vague and elastic mytho-theology, which, however, plays very little important part in their religious life " (p. 191). They do, do they ? Why then is there not the strongest reason to suspect that the Todas, far from practising a primitive form of religion, are only a degeneration ? They had ancestors, surely, to whom that mytho-theology was real, was operative ; now, it is almost forgotten, so overgrown has it become by the religion (or magic) of the sacred milk. Now, Professor Huxley admits (p. 240), that " crude beliefs and superstitions . . . may survive alongside of the highest and purest developments of monotheism ". But are we so certain that it is not the monotheism which survives, while the crude beliefs are a subsequent debasement ? Of course, an evolutionist likes to believe that everything becomes " higher " as it develops. But, as a scientist, he is familiar with the fact that degeneration exists in nature ; as a scientist he must recognize the probability that an unused organ is a disused organ which

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result to us is the emergence of monotheism from cruder religious views" (pp. 244, 245). I do not profess to understand what those myths are doing on the first level. How can you have myths at Level 1 when you do not proceed to personification till you get to Level 2? The admission appears to create a confusion, and possibly to indicate a weakness, in the whole theory. But what Professor Huxley wants us to understand, I take it, is that there are three distinct levels, (1) the recognition of an impersonal spiritual influence residing in things, (2) the recognition of personal powers "behind" those things, (3) the emergence from among these numerous powers of a single power, a belief which either subordinates or eliminates the rest. Numinism, polytheism, monotheism, that is the order of religious evolution. And consequently we shall not be stultifying the whole idea of religion, but merely returning to an earlier model, if we cut out the 'divine element and content ourselves with numinism once more. The Protestantism of the sixteenth century made its appeal to the primitive Church; Professor Huxley goes one better and appeals to primitive man. Evolution, here, appears to be cyclic in its tendency; we start with fetishism as its source, and we must return to fetishism as its completion.

When we find that two whole chapters of *Religion without Revelation* are devoted to anthropology, we are confident in the assumption that Professor Huxley will document this theory of religious evolution, so central to his whole theme. The chapters do not wear the air of

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mining which do and which do not represent the earlier, more primitive cultures. If, two thousand years hence, the natives of Great Britain are found, for the most part, to be wearing loin-cloths, but a few isolated clans—in Dorsetshire, let us say, and North Wales, and Cumberland—show a preference for trousers, it will be wrong for the anthropologist to conclude that in the twentieth century the loin-cloth was the badge of all our tribe. The agreement in practice between a few units enjoying no means of communication with one another, shows that these preserve the genuine tradition, and that the wearers of loin-cloths, for all their apparent primitiveness, are the innovators. It is hard to quarrel with that basis of generalization when it is applied to a single continent, Australia for example; still harder to doubt its value, when the whole of mankind is mapped out on the same principle.

Dr Schmidt's finding is that it is precisely the primitive peoples who retain a tradition of monotheism. A monotheism, no doubt, complicated by other elements, but recognizable for all that. Especially he draws attention to the pygmies, "the races of dwarfish people inhabiting Central Africa, the Andaman Islands, the peninsula of Malacca, and the more retired parts of the Philippines". We are struck everywhere, he says, by "the clear acknowledgment and worship of a Supreme Being. . . . The supremacy of this Being is so energetically and comprehensively expressed that all other supernormal beings are far inferior and invariably subject to him" (p. 191). And he

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once had its use. And, apart from science, does not common sense tell us that in all human probability the milk-cult, in which the Todas are so much absorbed, is more of a novelty to them than a theology which they have half forgotten?

But I must not delay longer over Professor Huxley's peeps into anthropology. The more I try to make out why he threw together these jottings about one South Sea, one African, and one North American tribe, the more I am baffled by the problem. For our present purpose it is enough to say that they lend no sort of corroboration to his idea that belief in gods is a late development. Why, I wonder, did he not quote some anthropological authority in support of this, his cardinal tenet? To inform myself I have had to have recourse to Dr. Schmidt's *Origin and Growth of Religion*, a work very recent and elaborately historical in its treatment; I would recommend Professor Huxley to provide himself with a copy, since the translator, Professor Rose, was a contemporary of ours at Balliol. Now, after recording the development of anthropological science from its first beginnings, what does Dr. Schmidt make of our problem?

As I have said, it is impossible to regard anthropology as a science in the strict sense; its theories will always be liable to revision. But the method used by Dr. Schmidt seems eminently reasonable. He claims that it is possible to distinguish among the savage tribes, whose institutions have been investigated by travellers and scholars, deter-

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religious notion belongs properly to natural things, and that supernatural ideas only began to be conceived under its influence. The full acceptance, in the anthropological world, of the "culture-centre" argument would be as fatal to his plea for a new religion as the discovery that man was originally carnivorous would be fatal (in the parallel suggested above) to the historical vindication of vegetarianism.

But history, after all, is not everything. As a secondary line of defence he will obviously claim that since (on the admission of Christian writers) there is such a thing as the religious sense, and since we find that it survives among peoples who have lost sight, or almost lost sight, of any objective supernatural reality, there is no reason why his plea for Neo-fetishism should not have a considerate hearing. I wonder, now, about this religious sense; or, as he prefers to call it, the sense of the sacred. Let us hear what he himself says about it.

As to its scope, "the powers that are behind nature, the mysteries that confront the inquiring mind; the great moments of man, his birth, his marriage, his death; the revelations of art and knowledge; the moral ideal and the practice of good—all these and many others may be objects of religion, but are not so necessarily" (p. 160). As to its constitutive elements, "The sense of the holy is a highly complex frame of mind. One of its chief psychological accompaniments is awe, which is itself complex, with fear, wonder, and admiration all entering as ingredients.

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concludes (p. 217): "The question of high gods of low races has passed beyond the first stage, in which it fought for existence or was tacitly neglected, and has at last reached a certain degree of quiet security. . . . The number of those who attribute to them an independent origin, unconnected with animism, magic, or totemism, continues to grow. A respectable body of opinion now puts their origin, if not actually earlier than that of these elements, at least contemporaneous with them". It is a curious fact that among the authors who are cited as giving respectful mention to Dr Schmidt's theory of "culture-circles" we find the name of R. H. Lowie, from whom Professor Huxley borrowed his interesting chat about the Crow Indians; yet Professor Huxley does not seem to have heard of Dr Schmidt.

It seems painfully probable that our author is behind the times. He could have made out an interesting case if we were content to follow the anthropology of yesterday. As it is, the whole of his historical case remains unproven. For, if a High God dates back in human belief as far as human belief can be traced with any certainty, there is no reason why the human tendency to hold things "sacred" should not date from that doctrine and derive from that doctrine, by processes, heaven knows how complicated, of miscalculation, false analogy, and association of ideas. It is arguable, I mean, that the religious notion belongs properly to supernatural things and only comes to be associated, later, with natural things. Whereas it is essential to Professor Huxley's contention to prove that the

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"good" and that is "bad". But is there? Professor Huxley's examples are very far from convincing me. "Nothing can make the religious sacrifice of human beings by the Aztecs seem anything but evil to us". To be sure, but is not this *moral* disapprobation? That the evil is done in the name of religion is a circumstance which heightens, but does not colour, our abhorrence of it. And "the deliberate cultivation, by certain representatives of certain Christian bodies, of a religiosity of sentiment, especially among emotional women" offends Professor Huxley, if he will be honest with himself, because it conflicts with his æsthetic sentiments, and for no other reason. The simplest proof can be put in the form of a challenge. Are not Professor Huxley's opinions here shared by the most bigoted materialist? And is it possible, without humbug, to hail as a spiritual *gourmet* a man who hated the very terminology of religion?

I have the less regret in disagreeing with Professor Huxley over this last point, because he has anticipated me by disagreeing with himself. At the end of the book (pp. 360, 361) he comes to the conclusion that only truth, beauty and goodness are absolute values (or "ultimates", as he calls them), and the sense of sanctity is only a way of approach in the quest for these. He ranks it with "love, joy, patience, disinterested curiosity, tolerance, and humour", a sufficiently miscellaneous collection. Among these, only humour can be described as a "sense" at all; and humour, evidently, is *sui generis*. If the sense of

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Reverence, into which there also enters submissiveness as an element, is a frequent if by no means invariable accompaniment. But mystery may probably be regarded as its real essence" (p. 161). As to its characteristics, "it tends to find its objects more and more in the familiar, less in the merely unusual. This, too, has its parallel in art. . . . The finest works of art deal often with the simplest and most familiar human verities. . . . There is still another point in which religion resembles art. . . . A man with a good natural taste . . . will find certain attempts at artistic expression definitely *wrong*. . . . They arouse in him a definite feeling of hostility or distaste owing to their stressing the lower at the expense of the higher. . . . Similarly, there are some whole religions, as well as the religious views of many individual persons, to which the man who is acute or sensitive in his religious perceptions and emotions reacts simply by a feeling of repulsion" (pp. 162, 163).

Let us take this last point first, for it is crucial. If there is really an independent sense of the sacred, with its own scale of values, then clearly we should expect that it would have its own sentiments of appreciation and condemnation. The moral sentiment in us which condemns, say, a violently obscene book, is something different, because something felt as different, from the æsthetic sentiment which condemns bad art in a book—it may be, in the same book. Evidently there ought to be a third type of experience, distinct from moral or æsthetic experience, which tells us that this is

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bitably must be called religious. I find it extremely dubitable ; and there is no "must" about it. What he and I felt was the perception of mystery, not the perception of the sacred.

There are great moments of appreciation in which the merely æsthetic seems to be transcended. Certain aspects of natural beauty (hence the name of "nature-mysticism") will provide them, the contemplation of some works of human architecture, music (so they tell me), and, of course, poetry. The last-named can most conveniently be instanced in cold print. *Kubla Khan*—there is mystery in that which is beyond mere beauty ; and everybody who reads poetry appreciatively will have his own list of "haunting" lines :

" Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides ",

or,

" Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade ",

—lines that make you catch your breath at the first reading, and break upon the mind with an appeal that is more than poetry ; it is as when light thrown from a concealed window bemuses the eye with its unaccountable effect.

That sense of mystery communicates itself occasionally to the outsider when he is confronted with certain ceremonies and institutions of religion, notably of the Catholic religion. I have myself experienced this when I was a

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sanctity is to have its own standards of good and bad achievement, other than the moral and æsthetic standards, surely it ought to be reckoned among the absolute values? To call it merely a "way of approach" in the quest for truth, goodness and beauty is to deny it any subject-matter, and therefore any critical standards, of its own.

But it is in the analysis of the feeling itself that we shall find, I think, the key to Professor Huxley's mistake. He identifies the sense of sacredness with the sense of mystery. In fact, he confuses religious mysticism (which is what he means by religion) with something that is loosely called "nature-mysticism"; a favourite modern vice. Thus, he writes in his autobiographical section (p. 113): "Indubitably what I received from the services in that beautiful chapel of Henry VI was not merely beauty, but something which must be called specifically religious. . . . But, once the magic doors were opened and my adolescence became aware of literature and art . . . pure lyric poetry could arouse in me much intenser and more mystical feelings than anything in the church service; a Beethoven concerto would make the highest flights of the organ seem pale and one-sided, and other buildings were found more beautiful than the chapel. It was none of the purely æsthetic feelings which were aroused, or not they only, but a special feeling". All that I understand; I was there myself from start to finish, and I have no difficulty in understanding Professor Huxley's feelings, because I shared them. I only quarrel with him when he says his feelings in Eton Chapel indu-

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there is no doctor who can tell you whether the news was good or bad. You can only compare the contents of two experiences if you have felt both. It is difficult to speak here without the appearance of arrogance in claiming unusual experiences for oneself. But I will dare to put it on record that I have, like most people whose sensibilities have been trained at all, experienced the sense of mystery in the contemplation of nature, of poetry, and of certain human activities, including religious activities to which I was a stranger ; on the other hand, I have not always been without those sentiments of " sweetness " or " consolation " in prayer which (though they are not denied, on occasion, to the most ordinary sinner) are yet transient samples of what is experienced in some of the higher states. If, then, the sense of mystery and the sense of sacredness are one, there ought to be a recognizable resemblance between the two orders of experience. But I would cheerfully go into a witness-box and give it as my sincere testimony that there is none.

I am saying nothing here about the value of religious " experiences ", whether they be common or out of the common ; that is not the point. Call them uprushes from the subliminal consciousness, or give them any other fancy name you will. The point is that, such as they are, they are different ; they do not resemble, as sensations, the experiences which are evoked by a sudden revelation of mystery in art, poetry or nature. I cannot deny that Professor Huxley has had religious experiences, but from

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Protestant ; and, curiously enough, I noted this effect of mystery among the merely superficial attractions of Catholicism in a book which I wrote for the same series in which *Religion without Revelation* appeared. (Conversely, I have sometimes found the same atmosphere since in our old English cathedrals.) The outsider, having this experience himself, infers that it is shared by the worshippers at his side ; and he proceeds to identify the sense of mystery with the "sense" of sacredness or religion. This is made all the more easy for him by the fact that the external effects produced by the sudden awakening of either sense are similar. Wordsworth, the great prophet of nature-mysticism, will write "A slumber did my spirit seal", or "My heart leaps up, when I behold a rainbow in the sky," or "But still my heart with rapture fills and dances with the daffodils"; and these descriptions might, I suppose, be applied easily enough to the effects of certain specifically religious experiences. Hence the inference that nature-mysticism and religious mysticism are all one.

But the resemblance here is in the external reactions ; and these are no clue to the content of the experience itself. A man will give the same muscular reactions under the influence of a good joke or of hysteria ; will weep because he is sad or because he smells an onion ; will grow red because he is ashamed or because he is violently angry. If a man experiences a shock from the contents of a telegram which he has received and immediately thrown into the fire,

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(p. 327), he quotes some lines from Donne's poem, *The Ecstasy* :

“ And whilst our souls negotiate there,
We like sepulchral statues lay,
All day the same our postures were,
And we said nothing, all the day ”.

Now, this is poetry, though it is written autobiographically, and it is doubtful whether the description is meant to be wholly accurate ; otherwise the profane mind would be tempted to ask whether they never got pins and needles. But, whatever immobility of pose this platonic affair may have induced, what right has Professor Huxley to say that “ the state, only with its objects altered, is just that which is found in religious mystics at a certain stage of their mystical development ” ? Not being a mystic, I cannot refute him here from personal experience. But, *quod gratis asseritur gratis negatur*. All he knows is that, on the evidence, Donne's “ ecstasy ” resembles (say) St Theresa's in the physical manifestations which accompanied it. And his conclusion is that the two must be thought of as having exactly the same quality, and differing only in their object. But what does Professor Huxley know about their quality ? And that, precisely, is the point in dispute.

The Christian reader will be inclined to complain, long since, that I am devoting a disproportionate amount of attention to what is, after all, a small and secondary part of religion ; that is, religion *as felt*, whether in the *gratia gratis datæ* of the saints, or in the “ sensible fervours ”

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all he tells us I see no reason to think that he has. And what I cannot understand is his sublime confidence that he is in as good a position to dogmatize on the subject as anybody else. He writes, in his autobiographical section, about "occasional moments of great happiness and spiritual refreshment, coming usually through poetry or through beautiful landscape, or through people. . . . It was no use trying to force these experiences of peace, or reconciliation, or rapture, or those in which supreme value seems within grasp ; they came at their sweet will or not at all " (pp. 120, 121). And it is presumably on the strength of these "moments" that he writes later on, referring to his Christian friends, "It was impossible that I, brought up in the same age and country as they, in some cases in the self-same atmosphere of school and university, should not have had experience of the same reality " (p. 132). But why "impossible"? More explicitly, he writes (p. 123), "It must be emphasized that such experiences are identical in their nature with some of the experiences recorded by the religious mystics, the only essential difference being that those of the mystics are related to and focussed upon definite theological conceptions, while mine (like those of Wordsworth) were not ".

Let me hasten to add that what I am criticizing is not any egotism that may be suspected in the above utterances ; it is only the curious facility with which Professor Huxley identifies two things which, so far as I ever had any experience of either, are radically distinct. In the same spirit

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concluding chapters, showing in what sense he believes in grace, sin and prayer, what place he allows for a church, for worship, for ritual. But all this is mere verbiage; he forsakes the numinous only for the nubilous. When we are told that "art and literature help nowadays for many people to accomplish many of the functions of contemplative prayer" (p. 283), or that "William James's principles of psychology will be a better commentary on the Decalogue than any hortatory sermon" (p. 303), or that "you may exercise your highest faculties by travel, now that travel is easy and cheap" (p. 304), you see at once that he has no suggestion to offer as to how religion is an addition to life as it is commonly lived. All very well to tell us that religion is "a way of approach"; but how does the scientist (say) who approaches his quest for truth in a "religious" spirit differ from any other scientist? Or how does he do it better, or what reason is there, even, to think that he enjoys himself more while he is at it? "The religious attitude of mind, which demands a reverent approach to reality, is necessary if the best use is to be made of human life, and if the varied activities and achievements of man are to be properly organized into a coherent whole" (p. 374); that is easily said, but does it *mean* anything? Of all the slogans issued in our time, "Hats off to reality!" is assuredly the most contemptible.

Of course, it is easy to see what Professor Huxley is really after; what he wants to preach is Panfetishism. The "reality" which remains after we have purged the world

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sometimes accorded to us others. The spiritual authors, with one voice, teach that sensible devotion is not to be desired or prayed for, and that little store is to be set by it; that the ecstasies, etc., of the saints are valuable to us as evidences of the working of God's power, rather than to the saints themselves, to whom the love of God was everything. Nay, it is generally admitted that, at least up to a point, these outward fruits of contemplative prayer are exactly counterfeited by hallucinations. Why then this insistence on a single and not very important religious phenomenon as if it were the whole of religion? I know, but it is my author's fault; look closely, and you will find that to him the "ecstatic moment" is the whole of religion. He defines grace as "a special inner illumination and peace which comes when conflicts are resolved on a high plane, when æsthetic or intellectual insight is vouchsafed; whenever, in fact, an unexpected or at least undeserved moment of spiritual achievement is thrust on the mind"—that is to say, *all* grace is sensible grace! And he adds "I believe that the individual attains his supreme satisfaction in these moments" (p. 367). True, he adds (p. 369) that to live solely or mainly for these moments is selfishness, because after all there is work to be done in the world. But when we ask him precisely what it is which "religion" can give us that is inaccessible to a nature (for he holds that there are such natures) tone-deaf to religion, he has nothing to point to except those moments themselves.

It is true that he writes paragraph after paragraph, in his

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satisfaction of plunging the mind in a common, social act, and always a satisfaction in familiar ritual hallowed by time and association " (p. 304). " For a common service, some form of ritual, however non-formal, is a necessity " (p. 300). " The simplest forms of ritual are those actions which are the natural accompaniments of a sense of awe or reverence—obedience, kneeling, or prostration " (p. 297). Do I understand that we may look forward to the spectacle of Professor Huxley prostrating himself before reality—always, of course, in its relatedness to human destiny? He has forgotten, I am afraid, that our human make-up includes not only a sense of reverence, but a sense of irreverence; not only an appreciation of the numinous, but an appreciation of the humorous. Organized worship, so long as you concede the possibility that a God exists, can never be wholly ridiculous; for, if the suspicion should prove true, the attitude of worship is commensurate to the dignity of that which is worshipped. But—worship without a God? I am afraid even those " moments " would not really survive the glare of publicity. Donne and the future Mrs Donne could afford to enjoy their ecstasy by themselves; but if a small boy had appeared on the next stile, in half a second they would have been five yards apart, picking cowslips. And the churches of Huxleyism—well, I am afraid I shall never be able to pay them a visit for fear of disgracing myself.

He wants not only organized religion, but organized religious thought (p. 328); in other words, he wants to

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of God "includes facts and forces of nature outside of and apart from man, the existence of matter and of myriads of other living beings", or rather "it includes certain aspects of all these and many other facts. It includes them in their aspect of relatedness to human destiny; and it includes them as held together, against the cosmic background, by a spirit of awe or reverence" (p. 49). But fetishism, like patriotism, is essentially selective; and you can no more sublimate the one into an attitude towards the whole of reality than the other into an attitude towards the whole of humanity.. While you admit the existence of God, it is possible to recognize "sacredness" in everything, as the great mystics have, because everything is sacred *to him*. But, when no Being is believed to exist *to whom* objects are sacred, you can only rescue the concept of sacredness by limiting it. The Hindu holds the cow sacred, but if he held it no more sacred than anything else, then neither the cow nor anything else would be sacred at all. Nothing is really left out of the wreck except those "moments" when Professor Huxley feels all funny inside; that is religion.

I do not know how seriously he means to be taken when he writes as if all the external part of religion, creeds and organized worship and even (p. 167) the "conflict" between theology and science would be perpetuated under Huxleyism. But he does not anticipate the disappearance of such things. "It might be said that if this is the case there is no room left for organized worship. I do not think this is so. There will always remain the religious

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on the doctrine of the Son's eternal Generation, it is the process by which the human mind can become the object of its own thought. This, I take it, is not a favourite subject of meditation with Professor Huxley, because the power of the mind to become its own object is, pre-eminently, the fact which makes nonsense of his whole destructive position. But it is a little strange that, in providing a cheap substitute for the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, he was not even at pains to make the substitute resemble its original. It is not everybody who can become a heretic without ceasing to be an atheist.

I suppose that the appeal of *Religion without Revelation* is, in intention, twofold. It is an appeal to the unbeliever, in the hope that he will pretend to attach a religious value to things which he does already (such as listening to concerts and going on Messrs. Cook's tours). It is an appeal to Christians, like myself, to give up the despairing battle against a world which rejects the notion of God, and join with him in a campaign for the spread of religiosity. For myself, I would be more impressed by the appeal if it contained any thread of connected argument to convince me. When Professor Huxley talks of "laws", "forces" and "powers" which surround man, which may have "mind" and "spirit" behind them, but assuredly not in them, and then exclaims at the folly of those who would personify such influences, is it possible that he does not realize my difficulty? I mean, that neither he nor I can conceive of a spirit as existing except in connexion with a personality;

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have a creed or creeds. And, lest we should think this impossible, he has sketched out for us in two separate places (pp. 328 *sqq.*, and Ch. II *passim*) his doctrine of the Trinity. In this he had been anticipated by Mr Wells; and it is interesting to look forward to a future when, with any luck, Mr Wells and Professor Huxley will be excommunicating one another. Professor Huxley will have no Veiled Being; he will stick to concrete realities. And his statement of the Nicene doctrine might well go down to history as one of the curiosities of literature. Here it is, in his own summary (pp. 61, 62): "As I see it broadly, God the Father is a personification of the forces of non-human Nature; God the Holy Ghost represents all ideals; and God the Son personifies human nature at its highest, as actually incarnate in bodies and organized in minds, bridging the gulf between the other two, and between each of them and everyday human life. And the unity of the three persons as One God represents the fact that all these aspects of reality are inextricably connected". In fact, his trinity consists of the real, the human mind and the ideal. That, doubtless, is what the early Fathers would have meant if they had had the advantage of a scientific education—three persons in no God.

It is a pity to spoil such utterances by comment. And, indeed, it is scarcely necessary to point out that if you do begin to philosophize upon the doctrine of the Trinity, mind takes the first place, not the second; and that if there is anything in our human experience which throws any light

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I have tried both, and I know that there is no resemblance. Doubtless Professor Huxley's offer to me is well meant; but I have never had one less tempting since I was sent a catalogue of baby-linen.

And the others? The people who have given up (or think they have given up) believing in God—will they take kindly to these emasculated aspirations after communion with a mystery which is not there? That is not my judgment of their temper. We are getting old, Professor Huxley, we are getting old; Wordsworth is not read much nowadays, and the mood of Victorian despair for which you prescribe remedies has given place to another frame of mind, less attuned to ideals. It may be that some philosophy of religion without God will appear in our time; but if it comes, it will not be a parody of Christianity; it will come from the East, where the religion of the Galilean has not yet taken deep root. But Europe, if she must perish, will perish still adoring, or deriding, or regretting the faith that was once hers.

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of a mind which is not personal ; of forces or powers which take their origin, in the last resort, from something which is not alive ; of laws which do not express an intelligence and are not enforced by a will. Why am I to be presented with this bewildering mythology of abstract nouns, and told that I shall personify them at my peril? I simply do not know how to depersonify them ; they *are* personal, all these phrases which Professor Huxley is showering on me. And he will not engage with me in these metaphysical controversies, he says, because the Crow Indians have no metaphysics. Let him preach to them, then, not to me.

And having failed, nay, not having even attempted, to provide me with any ground for abandoning the philosophy of theism, he hurries me off into a disquisition on comparative religion. Because primitive man had fetishes before he had gods, I must give up my God and take to fetishes. But, even if the argument held, is he correct about the fact? It seems, rather, that he is trying to palm off on me the leading theories of yesterday. He wants me to believe that the only thing which is really important about religion is the experience of ecstasy ; which is only the subconsciousness getting to work, but is very real and exciting for all that. But I do not think ecstasies are very important ; still less those moments, a matter of experience even to the unsanctified, at which we seem held by some power not ourselves in an attitude of prayer. These moments, he tells me, are identical in their quality with those experiences of mystery which Wordsworth and he have sometimes enjoyed. But

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These considerations apply, however remotely, even to a book on *The Conquest of Happiness*, even by such an author as Lord Russell. I do not profess to know what was his primary motive in writing it. Superficially, it is a book of that blameless order which we associate rather with the last century than with this ; indeed, were the writing only more polished, most of it might have come equally well from the pen of Samuel Smiles. That we achieve happiness only so far as we get outside ourselves, identifying ourselves with pursuits and aspirations not to be estimated in terms of mere pleasure ; that riches are not essential to the achievement, that the passions must be regulated if they are to be properly our servants, that ambition defeats its own object, and that time is spent fruitlessly which is devoted to the luxury of regret—all this is not said for the first time, and did not need a highly-trained philosopher to say it. The point about the book which jars on the nerves of the orthodox reader—and, therefore, I suspect, its value in the eyes of Lord Russell—is its dismissal, by casual silences and contemptuous allusions, of the Christian notion of conscience.

The trouble is—for the book begins on a polemical note which it afterwards conveniently forgets—that an American, Mr Joseph Krutch, in his book on *The Modern Temper*, has been using the language of pessimism ; has been telling us that we are living in a universe which has become both Godless and loveless, and that it is not a pleasant sort of universe to find yourself in. This kind of thing will not

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THERE could, I conceive, be few purer intellectual pleasures than to watch from an absolutely impartial standpoint the hesitations of a society shedding, half consciously, the last bonds which affiliate it to its old Christian beliefs. What may and may not, what must and must not be said ; the limits within which its prophets must hold themselves, if they are not to be discredited by too much of delicacy or of precipitancy, the gradual deterioration of its theological currency, as men relinquish ideas, and cling all the more eagerly to the words that once enshrined them—all this could be the subject of the most exquisite satire, if judgment could be suspended, if the issues were not felt as vital. It might be supposed that we were by now past that stage ; that the disintegration of our creeds had gone too far for any such embarrassments to persist. But—so innately conservative are we—the most advanced of our new spokesmen are not free men in dealing with their intellectual constituencies ; they must speak in parables, they must gild the pill. If they are to demolish our certainties with success, they must set to work behind a scaffolding which advertizes the intention of refacing them.

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high places especially. Why, then, this tendency to deplore the degeneracy of an age is no better, after all, than a pose of unhappiness, and it should have no influence on people who are prepared to think with the times.

The argument would be more satisfying if one swallow made a summer. King Solomon's experience of life was notoriously an exceptional one; who was it who commented on the text "Spare the rod and spoil the child" by pointing out that its author was very much in the position of the headmaster of a large public school? Nor is it much consolation to the modern pessimist, who complains that he has been robbed of his Christian certainties, to point out that the same world-weariness was possible many centuries before Christ was born. That one medieval friar, who had considerable cause to feel dissatisfied, lamented over scandals in the Church of his day, may prove that there were scandals, but hardly proves that he, let alone the world of his time, felt about that age as some of us feel about this. The attitudinizings of Byron are hardly more relevant. His complaint is, *ex hypothesi*, the complaint of a rebel; and, far from suggesting that most of his contemporaries were unhappy, implies rather that they felt at home in a world where Byron felt himself an exile. Mr Krutch would surely claim, rightly or wrongly, to be interpreting the feelings of a generation; would claim that beyond the common argument for pessimism, which is available always, our times give a special handle to it, inasmuch as we still live by a culture once inspired, but inspired no

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do ; it is contrary to the ideas of Marx and Lenin and all those fellows. Actually, of course, it matters very little to the prophets of the modern age whether we others are happy or not. For we have embarked on a hundred-year plan, and we are being invited to make the sacrifice of all we found pleasant and all we held sacred in the hope that, possibly, our great-nephews will be thankful to us. But you must fool some of the people some of the time ; and so we are to be persuaded that it is possible to be happy even under modern conditions. Accordingly, this book explains to us how a peer of the realm, with literary interests and accommodating views on the marriage laws, finds life worth living in his middle age.

The immediate rejoinder to Mr Krutch is simply made, and only occupies one short chapter. If he is unhappy about the present age, has not such unhappiness been characteristic of certain temperaments at every stage of history? Did not King Solomon—not that we really think it was King Solomon, but the assumption is convenient for literary purposes—drain life to the lees and find that after all it was only vexation of spirit? Did not Lord Byron, in times more prosperous, materially, than these, present the world with a picture of broken-hearted *ennui*? Nay, since Mr Krutch regrets our loss of religious faith, and points us back to the Middle Ages, to the Middle Ages he shall go. Roger Bacon, in a passage selected by so impartial an authority as Dr Coulton, may be heard inveighing against the corruptions of his time, against wickedness in

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stricter sense. His ideal is an *ataraxia* which has, indeed, its pursuits and ambitions, but knows how to regulate them and to prevent any one-sided dominance of them. Mind-control is everywhere his specific. But he does not, it is to be observed, claim any very heroic virtues for it. "In discussing this problem", he writes, "I shall confine my attention to those who are not subject to any extreme cause of outward misery. I shall assume a sufficient income to secure food and shelter, sufficient health to make ordinary bodily activities possible. I shall not consider the great catastrophes, such as loss of all one's children, or public disgrace". It is evident that these restrictions of outlook destroy the value of the book as a general guide to human conduct. Glaucon and Adimantus, at the beginning of the second book of the Republic, want to be convinced that the good man is happy, even when he is subjected to every conceivable kind of material and moral discomfort. We must not go to Lord Russell for consolations of this kind; he is writing only for the ordinary man with his ordinary every-day worries. The worries, in fact, which spring from within, and should be capable therefore of control from within. You might describe the book as an advertisement for autopsychanalysis.

What, then, in detail are the enemies to interior peace with which Lord Russell would have us grapple? He has given us, on his twentieth page, three "very common types" to illustrate the dangers of self-absorption, and the

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longer, by a supernatural hope in which we have ceased to believe.

If Lord Russell wanted to find earlier parallels for this attitude, he might have gone to the last century, the age of Ruskin and Matthew Arnold. He might complain, with some appearance of justice, that a mood of pessimism which is celebrating its diamond jubilee is an outworn mood, clamouring for burial. But it is to be considered that the Victorian pessimists were men of sensitive fibre, quick to catch the first chill of disillusion. The trouble today is that the sense of disillusion is not confined to Mr Krutch or to any literary coterie. It is, I should say, particularly common among men and women who have outlived the first ardours of youth, and are reflective enough to think at all. Possibly they are wrong; possibly when they have tried Lord Russell's treatment for unhappiness they will lament no longer. "That Russell feeling" will have changed the world for them. But in the meanwhile they must not be dismissed as *poseurs*, effete reincarnations of the Byronic spirit. They want a philosophy of life; and the question is whether the temperate eudæmonism of Lord Russell will meet their demands.

I call it eudæmonism; Lord Russell himself does not shrink from the title of hedonist, but when he writes like that he is presumably condescending to popular language. He sees well enough that intemperate indulgence in violent pleasures or excitements brings its own punishment in the form of reaction. He is an epicurean in the better and

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narcissism as a *common* phenomenon? Narcissism is only psychoanalytical slang for inordinate vanity, a vanity almost amounting to self-worship. There is a dash of vanity in most compositions, a strong dash of it in some, but not strong enough, surely, for us to start calling it by sham-scientific names. Megalomania, after all, is only ambition run mad; and that ambition within limits is normal and even desirable Lord Russell himself protests: "One may say that some kind of power forms the normal and legitimate aim of every person whose natural desires are not atrophied. . . . Some form of desire for power is therefore to be accepted as part of the equipment of the kind of men out of whom a good community can be made" (pp. 233, 234). Are we not to say the same about self-respect? And self-worship is only self-respect run mad. We can hardly suppose that Lord Russell intended his work for the benefit of maniacs.

It is one of the chief drawbacks about the new psychology that it cannot establish its unit; cannot decide where the line comes between the normal and the abnormal. This makes it a weapon all the more handy for the popular philosopher; he can bandy names without the responsibility of deciding for himself or for his readers whether the states to which he is referring are pathological or not. So here. Lord Russell introduces us to two "common types" which are in reality very uncommon types, if you give words their literal meaning. And now, what of the third type, the "sinner"? He means by this "the man

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importance of overcoming it. They are the sinner, the narcissist and the megalomaniac.

There is a superior kind of *finesse* about this arrangement. A less practised controversialist would have put the sinner third, so as to lead up to him. Lord Russell knows better than that; he will disarm us, take our breath away, by leading the sinner first, so that we shall let the rest of the sentence pass unchallenged. But we must not let him play with us like this; we must pin him down to exact statement. And the really remarkable thing about the list just given is not the inclusion in it of the sinner, which is only what we might have expected of the author.; the really curious thing is that, apparently carried away by his subject, he gives us as common types the narcissist, who is not a particularly common type, and the megalomaniac, who is not a common type at all.

We are provided with a trenchant little *exposé* of Alexander's psychology, and of Napoleon's. Admirable; but how many people have you or I met who really share that psychology in any recognizable degree? How many people passing us in the street (to use Lord Russell's own test) really impress us as suffering from megalomania? I may not have taught myself sufficiently what he calls "the art of reading faces", but I want to be convinced about all this. "To this type", he tells us, "belong many lunatics and most of the great men of history". Yes, but neither class is largely represented in, say, the ordinary tubecarriage. And are we really familiar, in ordinary life, with

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Unless we are to identify happiness with a fatuous kind of cheerfulness which commonly makes a man quite intolerable to his neighbours, it must have its light and shade, its chastening influences. And a life which contains no recollection of past failure to warn us against future misconduct or spur us on to greater moral effort may induce a sort of bovine contentment, bred of thoughtlessness, but is not human enough to deserve the name of happy.

The fact is, of course, that Lord Russell identifies the sense of sin with a kind of maudlin whimpering which has nothing whatever to do with penitence. I use the word maudlin advisedly, because it seems to me that he is only familiar with the phenomenon as an after-dinner experience. "His sense of sin may be buried deep in his subconscious, and only emerge when he is drunk or asleep" (p. 20); "all that alcohol does for them is to liberate the sense of sin, which reason suppresses at saner moments" (p. 16). It is, I conceive, quite possible that nobody has ever opened the secrets of his conscience to Lord Russell on strictly teetotal occasions. But there are others, those of my own profession, for example, whose experience takes a wider range, and enables them to see the difference between contrition and that snivelling self-pity which is the drunkard's travesty of it. We all know, indeed it is proverbial, that drunkenness encourages speech on occasions, and in company, where a sober man would have kept his feelings to himself. But that is not to say that drunkenness is the sole cause of the feelings expressed; its effect is rather to

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who is absorbed in the consciousness of sin. This man is perpetually incurring his own disapproval, which, if he is religious, he interprets as the disapproval of God. He has an image of himself as he thinks he ought to be ; which is in continual conflict with his knowledge of himself as he is " (p. 20). Now, all this may be interpreted in either of two ways. There is an exaggerated preoccupation with sin which is (as any spiritual author will tell us) a morbid thing ; as much so as megalomania, as much so as narcissism. It is part of the make-up of those unfortunate souls which are technically described as " scrupulous ". And there is a sense of sin which is natural to the ordinary man living in a fallen world ; as natural as the self-respect, with a touch of vanity in it, which we find in the majority of our neighbours ; as natural as the decent spirit of ambition which Lord Russell himself praises. To which of these attitudes towards sin does he refer? He does not tell us, because he does not mean us to know. He wants it to be inferred that *all* sense of sin is a psychological aberration, which we must correct if we are to be " happy ".

Observe, I am not quarrelling with Lord Russell here over his theological first principles. Granted, for the sake of argument, that the universe has no personal Creator, and that there is no Judgment to be anticipated, it would still be possible for men to regret their base actions, and to wish them undone. Such an attitude may, on the given assumption, be futile and fruitless, but is it abnormal? Is it pathological? Is it even inconsistent with " happiness "?

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others", or "like all others". Which is, indeed, the whole nerve of the question.

I do not suppose that my own early education differed greatly from Lord Russell's. I do not care for the word "Puritan", but I was brought up in a tradition of Evangelicalism which certainly insisted on the doctrine of sin. That doctrine figured largely in the classics of my first boyhood, such as *Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Fairchild Family*. But my favourite hymn was *Onward Christian soldiers*—it does not say much, perhaps, for the delicacy of my musical ear or my literary discrimination, but at least these sinister influences which Lord Russell experienced seem to have passed me by. Since then, I have never known what it was to pass a day without asking God to forgive me my sins, but for the life of me I could never find that the exercise militated against happiness, or drove me unduly in on myself. If I am self-centred, I can find plenty of better explanations; if I have been through periods of depression, they have been quite unconnected, always, with the state of my conscience, and were as a rule more intimately concerned with my liver. Since we must be autobiographical, let me thus set down my own experiences to confront Lord Russell's, and ask him whether there is any justification on earth for his phrase "like others who had a Puritan education", except the highly-coloured reminiscences of a few literary young gentlemen who have felt bound to pour scorn on the education they received from their parents, to account for the

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translate feelings into speech. A man swears more when he is drunk, not because he is more annoyed, but because he cannot control the expression of his annoyance; makes love more freely, not because his sentiments of love are deeper, but because he has overcome the embarrassment which held him tongue-tied. And if he confesses his sins when he is drunk, it is not because he has more consciousness of sin, but because he has less shame about referring to it in public.

If we are to be really modern, Lord Russell sees, we must find out where this mistaken sense of sin takes its origin in our consciousnesses, subconsciousnesses, and unconsciousnesses before we can proceed to get rid of it effectively. And here he embarks on an autobiographical passage which I would willingly let alone if it were not so important to the subject. "I was not born happy", he writes (p. 18). "As a child, my favourite hymn was *Weary of earth, and laden with my sin*. . . . In adolescence, I hated life and was continually on the verge of suicide. . . . Now, on the contrary, I enjoy life. . . . Very largely it is due to a diminishing preoccupation with myself. Like others who had a Puritan education, I had the habit of meditating on my sins, follies and shortcomings. I seemed to myself—no doubt justly—a miserable specimen. Gradually I learned to be indifferent to myself and my deficiencies . . ." and so on. "Like others who had a Puritan education"—let us admire that vagueness of our common speech which makes it uncertain whether the author means "like some others", "like most

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Here we have to call reason to our aid ; we must see conscience as the chimera it is. Accordingly, we must go back to our childhood and discover how the obsession got there. Its source "in practically every case is the moral teaching which the man received before he was six years old at the hands of his mother or his nurse. He learned before that age that it is wicked to swear, and not quite nice to use any but the most lady-like language, that only bad men drink, and that tobacco is incompatible with the highest virtue. He learned that one should never tell a lie. And above all he learned that any interest in the sexual parts is an abomination".

Let us pause for a moment to take breath. Lord Russell is no longer, ostensibly at any rate, giving us his own reminiscences ; he is speaking of nurseries generally, and not even Puritan ones. All this is part of the common round ; it happens "in practically every case". The trouble is that I cannot recognize any of the symptoms. The excellent Evangelical household in which my early views were moulded must, it seems, have been Russellian before its time ; it is all very strange. My elders, religious people of both sexes, drank beer at table, and it never occurred to me to reprove them. And no wonder, for when it was necessary for me to take cold-liver oil for my health they used to give it me floating on the top of a glass of port. When I was indulging in early views as to the profession I intended to adopt in life, I announced (with an uncomfortable degree of prescience) that I was going to be

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unanimity with which they have forgotten the lessons it inculcated?

But it is time we turned on to the context—a whole chapter of it—in which Lord Russell deals with this question of religious education *ex professo*. The reader is supposed to have been through a Purgative Way, in the course of which he has successfully triumphed over the spirit of competition, boredom and excitement, fatigue and envy. Of the method by which he is expected to do this we can form an idea by studying the recipe for getting rid of worry (p. 77): “When some misfortune threatens, consider seriously and deliberately what is the very worst that could possibly happen. Having looked this misfortune in the face, give yourself sound reasons for thinking that after all it would be no such terrible disaster. . . . When you have looked for some time steadily at the worst possibility and have said to yourself with real conviction, *Well, after all, that would not matter so much*, you will find that your worry diminishes to a quite extraordinary extent. It may be necessary to repeat the process a few times, but in the end, if you have shirked nothing in facing the worst possible issue, you will find that your worry disappears altogether, and is replaced by a kind of exhilaration”. By such mental discipline we have Coué’d ourselves out of those other psychological oppressions which obscure our peace of mind; it remains only to Coué ourselves out of the superstitious illusion that it matters to anybody, ourselves included, whether we have done anything wrong or not.

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how often am I to tell you that it's very rude to point? "That "Puritan" home we so often hear about was always, in fact, a rarity; today it is a literary fiction. Yet in the public-houses, at any rate—in *vino veritas*—these obstinate qualms of "conscience" persist.

If it were really true that the commands and prohibitions issued to us, and specially insisted upon, during the first six years of our lives were the source of all our later moral judgments, what a hotch-potch of trivialities the human conscience would enshrine! In any middle-class home the child is largely governed by a series of regulations which are meant to ensure peace and order, chiefly for the benefit of its elders. Not to scream loudly, not to pull your sister's hair, not to leave things lying about, not to come into a room with muddy boots, above all not to finger things and break them—these are typical items of the real Children's Decalogue. I believe any one of us would find, if he would interrogate his memory with candour, that his first impressions of real guilt, accompanied by panic-stricken terror and scalding tears, were connected with the breaking of a vase or a picture-frame. Now, I can easily believe that such violent emotional crises have a permanent effect on a child's psychology (though I shall always have the liveliest doubts when the psychologists profess to tell me which crises have what effects, how often, in what measure, or how the mischief the mischief can be undone). Breaking a wine-glass when you are dining out does produce a measure of embarrassment which is not warranted by the value of the

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" the kind of man who smokes a pipe and leans against the wall " ; it was said with no intention of shocking, and, in fact, it passed unproved. I was educated in the ordinary decencies of life, but not so as to awaken in the slightest degree my interest in sex ; I was reprovèd, sometimes, for slang phrases, but with no suggestion that there was anything wicked about them. Lying I did certainly come to regard as a grave delinquency. But then, it does no harm to cultivate accuracy in reminiscence ; especially if there is any danger that you will grow up to be a writer.

It will doubtless be objected that I was fortunate beyond others in the circumstances of my upbringing ; that the great majority of our fellow-countrymen do not, did not even then, experience such considerate treatment. But I have dwelt on my own impressions because they relate to the kind of education which Lord Russell, for some reason, seems to regard as normal and typical. No one would be more ready than I to admit that most young lives are far less carefully sheltered. But, for that precise reason, what conceivable value can we attach to Lord Russell's speculations about the origin of the human conscience? If he really thinks the ordinary boy learns, before he is six years old, that it is wicked to swear, let him go out and listen to the conversation of the first batch of street-boys he encounters ; he will find that the lesson has been indifferently assimilated. There is truth, though perhaps exaggerated, in that immortal piece of popular dialogue : " Look, Mum ! There's a —— hippopotamus ! " " Albert,

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But I cannot see that Lord Russell's account of the matter leaves any room for such distinctions. By his way of it, the whole illusion of conscience ought to arise out of parental prohibitions. And that judgment, as I have tried to show, is curiously at variance with the facts.

However, let us proceed to the development of his argument. "He knew these to be the views of his mother, and believed them to be those of his Creator. To be affectionately treated by his mother, or, if she was neglectful, by his nurse, was the greatest pleasure of his life, and was only obtainable when he had not been known to sin against the moral code. He therefore came to associate . . ." and so on. "Gradually as he grew older he forgot where his moral code had come from . . ." and the rest of it. And in the matter of sex "This feeling is of course reinforced by the *Œdipus* complex, since the woman most loved in childhood is one with whom all sexual freedoms are impossible". "Of course" is good. O blessed word *Mesopotamia*!

Mr Belloc once wrote an article on the word "and", with special reference to its uses in controversial literature. I wonder what he would make of it in that sentence "He knew these to be the views of his mother, AND believed them to be those of his Creator"? If I follow my author's train of thought rightly, it is this: The mother's preferences were interpreted, in every case, as having a supernatural sanction behind them. Consequently, harmless pursuits like smoking, drinking and swearing are

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object or the trouble caused ; and it may be that some echo of a childish nerve-storm is responsible for the feeling. But there is no kind of proportion between these tremors of the social animal and the regret which a decent man feels when, let us say, he reflects that he has been guilty of taking away his neighbour's character by uncharitable gossip.

Professor Huxley, in the far more valuable account which he has given us of his own early impressions (*Religion without Revelation*, p. 111) does indeed suggest that the circumstances of childhood produce a special attitude, and one which roots itself deeply in us, towards the morality of sex. " Certain subjects and actions were met by our elders and betters . . . by an atmosphere in which Authority took shelter behind Mystery, or was itself obviously shocked. Childhood is very quick to detect such differences of atmosphere, and it seems probable that any subject whatsoever could have this mysterious horror woven around it as it developed in the child's mind. . . . I imagine that this sort of sacred horror is a very common cause of undue reticence and undue repression in a very large number of human beings ". That is only to say that it takes a very clever parent to allay, without exciting, an unhealthy curiosity, and that the result of mismanagement can be a disproportionate preoccupation with the sins arising out of sex. That disproportion is observable in many consciences ; the sense of sin is mysteriously interwoven with the sense of shame, which is something quite different.

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certainly do not coddle them when they have been supposedly virtuous. And yet it is not a small class of mankind that experiences sorrow for wrong action in the past ; it is a perfectly normal sentiment among people who are not brought up in circumstances shockingly depraved. Of course, if Lord Russell means his observations to apply only to those few unfortunates who are, by a fault of temperament, really scrupulous about their sins, we should be prepared to wait, in all humility, for the statistics with which he resolutely fails to provide us. But when he leaves it to be understood that they apply to anybody and everybody who has ever had the experience of contrition, we cannot be content to suspend judgment over them as unproven ; they are simply untrue.

That he is in revolt against morals as ordinarily conceived in civilized society, Lord Russell does not attempt to disguise. " Do not be afraid of irreverence towards the memory of those who controlled your childhood. They seemed to you then strong and wise because you were weak and foolish ; now that you are neither, it is your business to examine their apparent strength and wisdom. . . . Our nominal morality has been formulated by priests and mentally enslaved women. It is time that men who have to take a normal part in the normal life of the world learned to rebel against this sickly nonsense " (pp. 104, 105). This wholesale revolt is being preached by an author who has no ethic to replace it with. The only ideal of conduct which he recommends to our pursuit is a kind of senile self-

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conceived as something wrong, not indeed in the consciousness but in the subconsciousness of the man who was her child. Yes, but is it really true? Is it not the fact that the ordinary human being, however Puritan his education may have been, discovers for himself as he grows older, without any sage counsel from Lord Russell, that there is nothing intrinsically wrong in such indulgences? But on strictly moral issues, in the matter of purity, for example, or lying, his scruples remain. Why should this happen? Evidently there is a distinction in kind between the things which used to be called wrong and the things of which it used to be said "Mummy doesn't like you to do that". Whether he is conscious of that distinction at the time, as I suppose most children are, or only becomes conscious of it later, does not greatly signify. The plain fact is that while certain principles of childhood are seen to be no longer valid, others hold their own in the mind of the adolescent and of the man, until Lord Russell obligingly offers to disabuse him of them.

When all is said and done, quite a large number of people are not taught their earliest lessons by a mother, or even by the nurse who suckled them. For myself, I suppose I derived the moral notions I have from my aunts, who inspired me (I hope) with becoming respect but not (I protest) with any Freudian reactions. And very many children are brought up by mothers who set them an example of swearing and drunkenness, or at best give them no sort of indication what moral activities they prefer—

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priggishness which it finds in the attitude of the immoralist. Nor is a young man likely to be convinced that his moments of regret for the past are, as Lord Russell rather feverishly affirms that they are, the moments when he is least himself. "The sense of sin is especially prominent at moments when the conscious will is weakened by fatigue, by illness, by drink, or by any other cause. . . . The devil was sick, the devil a saint would be". It is curious to note how our author's grip of psychological realities can be impaired by the memory of a medieval jingle. Actually, who does not know that illness or weariness makes us thrust aside the murmurings of conscience, which it overcomes with self-pity and self-excuse? And drunkenness, as we have seen, may make men blab about their sins, but does not create or deepen the sense of sin; it liberates the tongue, not the heart. The moments at which *in real life* men begin to feel their own unworthiness are moments at which they are taken out of themselves, by a romantic love, for example, or by some revelation of beauty in nature—not to mention, since Lord Russell would not be interested to hear about them, the opportunities offered by the exercise of religion.

One useful word Lord Russell is continually using to denote an essential element in all happiness, the word "zest". We experience its meaning only when we are engaged in some occupation or carried away by some impersonal interest which takes us outside ourselves. And our author insists on it so strongly that he is not ashamed to mention, more than once, watching games in which we

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approval which he calls happiness. It is poison without the red label.

I do not imagine, however, that Lord Russell's book is really likely to make scoundrels of people who are not scoundrels already. There is a price to be paid for any form of mental self-discipline, and I think our author is inclined to underestimate it. He does not suggest setting apart "say, an hour a day for self-examination", which is perhaps fortunate for his system. But "a man should make up his mind with emphasis what he rationally believes, and should never allow contrary irrational beliefs to pass unchallenged or obtain a hold over him, however brief. This is a question of reasoning with himself in those moments in which he is tempted to become infantile, but the reasoning, if it is sufficiently emphatic, may be very brief". I may be a pessimist about human nature, but I fancy that these ejaculatory acts of uncontrition which Lord Russell proposes are likely to be too much for the ordinary sinner, who will always allow some relics of decent feeling to remain unpurged in his mind. He will prefer to give his conscience an occasional holiday, rather than undergo this continual discipline of *peccare fortiter*.

The more so, because the happiness which Lord Russell promises him is not of a particularly ravishing description. It looks well on paper, this ideal of *pacata posse omnia mente tueri*; and a time of life comes at which most of us would be glad to possess it. But youth asks rather for adventure than for peace of mind, and mistrusts a certain

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the causes which appeal for our support. I mean the public causes which would enlist a man's whole sympathies ; it is still possible, of course, to lose yourself in a fad or in some form of merely local endeavour. But for the larger issues of political life we have lost all stomach. The Communists may perhaps be an exception ; but it would not take many years of success to disillusion them equally. We want something to live for ; something to enlist our energies and involve us in mental conflict ; mere placidity, Lord Russell's *summum bonum*, does not attract us. And indeed he himself has to recognize that you cannot attain happiness by aiming at it ; you must always be aiming at something else.

I wonder if I have a right to hazard the guess that Lord Russell is protesting too much? That the reason why he is so loud in support of his doctrine of zest is precisely because he knows his philosophy would take all the zest out of life for many of us? After all, there is one Cause in which the meanest of us may engage himself without the fear of ridicule ; one interest which is still available if we are bedridden, if we are in prison, if we are handicapped by every conceivable natural disadvantage—I mean, of course, what an older philosophy called “ the moral struggle ”. I know that nowadays it is fashionable to talk as if only one department of morality appealed to the instincts of the generous, that department of it which is known as “ social justice ”. But this is to define its scope unduly, and to diminish its importance for those of us who have neither the position

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are interested as an example of what he means. I do not find his psychology convincing when he suggests that we ought first of all to rid ourselves of the mental encumbrances which obsess us, self-pity, envy, inordinate ambition, and so on, in the hope that when we have done this impersonal interests will automatically supervene. A man may surely go through a good deal of mental self-discipline before he finds that it has evoked a nascent curiosity about the doings of the Bolton Wanderers. But it is a matter of experience that the casual emergence of a new interest, though it be only golf, will sometimes rescue the victim of self-absorption. Many of Lord Russell's instances of "happiness" emphasize this notion; perhaps none more strangely than when he refers to the happiness of workmen in Soviet Russia. One would be inclined to suspect that there is a fly in the ointment somewhere, or, at any rate, a tick in the butter. But it is not difficult to believe that those Russians who are sufficiently at the centre of things to identify themselves with the fortunes of the existing Government do find zest in their employments, however undistinguished. For they have a cause at heart, and (though they would not like to be told so) a double cause. They are working for the success of their own economic theories, and they are working at the same time to exalt their nation above others. To have a cause at heart—that, surely, is what makes a man take all the difficulties of life in his stride.

Now, it is pre-eminently our modern malady, in this country at least, that we have all become disillusioned about

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perfectly agree that the good actions of a saint, for example, are commonly unreflective, and that the same might be said of many ordinary human actions—the one cited, for example, unless the stream was a very strong one and you had to swim for it. But I cannot believe that, with us ordinary folk, a twinge of self-approval really has the devastating effects Lord Russell ascribes to it. When I thanked a neighbour of mine for a simple piece of neighbourly kindness, and he answered, "Not at all, that's what we're here for", I suspect that Lord Russell would have been scandalized—such a cold-blooded point of view, almost as bad as the Boy Scouts. . . . But I found the words rang like music in my ears, because they were such an admirable summary of the normal Englishman's attitude towards morality, and towards kind actions in particular. Goodness is what we, men, are here, on this imperfect earth, for. It, and not happiness, is the end of our being.

I am afraid that, if I must do full justice to my impressions, I shall have to add that the normal Englishman will always connect this rough notion of duty he has with an even rougher notion of religion. His mind will be coloured by religious influences, even if he thinks of religion itself as somehow irrational. Let me not be thought to agree with him; to my own mind religion and the Christian religion, morality and Christian morality, are as lucidly rational as they are irrational to Lord Russell's. But the ordinary Englishman has a curious tenacity for certain religious

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nor the ability to affect, in any considerable measure; the political life of our generation. Once conceive the world as a battle-ground between Good and Evil, either expressed in a thousand different forms, is it not evident that even our lighter actions contribute in some degree to the victory of one side? That everything matters, because there is good or evil in the character of every action, and that life, lived in whatever conditions, can be dull only to the unimaginative? All this certainty Lord Russell's philosophy would sweep away from us. For it claims, not that it is irrational to regret our bad actions, but that it is irrational to consider any action (unless it interferes notably with our neighbour's convenience) a bad action at all. Life, as it dwells in Lord Russell's ambitions, is no longer a Pilgrim's Progress; it is only a constitutional, undertaken by a nervous hypochondriac for the benefit of his health.

I am well aware that language of this kind would shock Lord Russell's ear if his attention were drawn to it. All this talk of a moral struggle makes virtue a laborious and priggish affair, whereas a good action ought to proceed spontaneously and unreflectively from the goodwill of the agent. "If you see a child drowning", he writes, "and save it as the result of a direct impulse to bring help, you will emerge none the worse morally. If on the other hand you say to yourself, It is the part of a virtuous man to succour the helpless, and I wish to be a virtuous man, therefore I must save this child, you will be an even worse man afterwards than you were before" (p. 246). Now I

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and the Naval or Military Type respectively. But I never got beyond the business type. For here, it seemed to me, portrayed beyond all possibility of misrecognition, line by line, feature by feature, was an early likeness of my brother, who writes as "Evoe" in *Punch*.

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notions, left over, perhaps irrationally, from a Christian past; in particular, he has an affection for what is perhaps the most difficult of all Christian doctrines, that of Providence. And I think he is likely to find more happiness in this confidence than in the startlingly priggish idea of "resignation" with which Lord Russell seeks to replace it. When he is told that a man "who is engaged in important work shows a failure in the desirable kind of resignation if he is distracted by matrimonial unhappiness; if his work is really absorbing he should regard such incidental troubles in the way in which one regards a wet day, that is to say, as a nuisance about which it would be foolish to make a fuss", he will not, I think, feel particularly receptive towards the new doctrine.

As I say, his moral notions may be based on a sentiment rather than on a philosophy; but it will take a good deal of rational criticism to disabuse him of them. And especially I hope that he will not be impressed by a type of criticism which tries to explain away the whole idea of conscience on the strength of a few quite gratuitous speculations about the experiences of the child mind. Is there any subject so easy to dogmatize about, or so easy to make mistakes about, as the relation between a given childhood and the manhood or womanhood to which it forms the preface? While I was writing these pages I picked up a book called *Abnormal Children*, by a recognized authority on the subject. I saw that towards the end he gave portraits of three normal "types", labelled The Business Type, the Student Type,

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If there was fun to be poked, Mr Mencken would poke it in a quite undenominational spirit. The Catholics should have their dose with the rest of them.

Unfortunately, for this purpose the scissors-and-paste method was found to be inadequate. It was necessary to write a book, involving the consultation of five or six authorities, which should have something of Mr Mencken's own in it. And here he exposes himself to attack ; for it is lamentably true that your humorist sees things as funny only from his particular angle of vision ; and if he commits himself to definite opinions he is apt to be seen as funny by others, from angles, deuce take it, not his. Mr Mencken's humour is not such as to appreciate the rare flavour of the great anti-atheist joke. And it would only be paying Mr Mencken in his own coin if we selected from his book, *Treatise on the Gods*, some of the richer pieces of unconscious humour, and set them out at length, thus :

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ON MYSTICISM

" St Augustine inclined toward mystical practices, and the cult was prosperous so early as the Fourth Century, especially in the Eastern Church. It came into the Western Church with monasticism, which was originally grounded upon it, and found adherents in such magnificoes as Ekkehard of St. Gall, Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis Assisi, Ignatius Loyola, Thomas Aquinas, St Catharine of Siena, and St Teresa " (p. 6).

VI

MENCKENIANA

MR MENCKEN is the man who writes those funny books called "Americana". At least, he does not exactly write them; he cuts out extracts from the provincial newspapers of the United States, when they strike him as funny, and prints them with captions of his own. Some of the best deal with religion, or at least with the habits and the outlook of religious persons; nothing is more provincial than your religious publicist, in the States especially. In this way Mr Mencken has made a good thing out of the anti-Christian joke, which has been going briskly ever since Satan asked "Doth Job serve God for naught?" and retains, even in these lean days, a simulacrum of its old popularity.

I think somebody must have told him that as a conscientious scoffer he was paying too little attention to us Catholics. The Prohibitionist antics of the Methodists, the backwoods theology of Tennessee, offered such an obvious target that he did too little justice to us others.

"Now shame it were, cried good Lord James,
Shall never be said of me,
That I and mine have turned aside
From the Church in jeopardy—"

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AN EXCURSUS INTO ETYMOLOGY

"It was just as natural that his Mother should have borne the name of Mary, for that was the name borne by the mothers of a long line of other prophets and heroes with divine fathers, among them, Myrrha the mother of Adonis, Maya the mother of Buddha, Maia the mother of Hermes, and Maritala the mother of Krishna" (p. 176).

HISTORICAL ACCURACY

"The great Council of Niceæ, which met in 365" (p. 225).

"The Emperor Henry V, crawling on his knees in the snows of Canossa" (p. 284).

THE AMERICAN TOUCH

"Ellsworth Huntingdon and Leon F. Whitney, searching *Who's Who in America*, found that, of every 100,000 Unitarians, i.e., heretics, in the population, 1,185¹ were sufficiently distinguished to be listed therein, whereas only 18 professing Methodists qualified, and only 8 Lutherans, and only 7 Catholics" (p. 327).

But this method of criticism, unlaborious as it is, will hardly meet the challenge. It would be impossible for Mr Mencken himself to understand the holy joy which his

¹ Reference to statistics throws a curious light on this statement. It appears that only 58,697 Unitarians have managed to keep their names out of *Who's Who in America*.

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CHURCH HISTORY (PIUS IX IN 1870)

"Confronted by a revival and epidemic of Gallicanism which menaced not only his temporal power but also his spiritual authority, he was forced to seek a ground for his pretensions that would be beyond the reach of challenge or denial. He found it in the doctrine of papal infallibility" (p. 33).

A THOUGHT

"To this day the wine used at the Eucharist is almost invariably red, not white" (p. 47).

NOT REALLY (FROM A PASSAGE ON THE SUN-GOD)

"In the Old Testament the sun plays an important rôle. Yahweh himself is often compared to it, and his command of it, both directly and through agents, is counted as one of the greatest of his glories" (p. 78).

THE JESUITS

"Though they deny it with vehemence, it is almost universally believed that, in their dealings with an increasingly recalcitrant world, they hold that the end justifies the means" (p. 121).

THE REASON WHY

"In the Catholic areas of the United States the Roman hierarchy effectively prevents all rational instruction in the physiology of sex, for by its ethical system sex is intrinsically a wicked matter" (*ibidem*).

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multitude ; who are convinced, somehow, that there is an Omnipotent Being who needs to be placated, although they do not trust themselves to secure that object—the faithful laity come first, in logical order at least, and the clergy later. And not only in logical order ; apparently also in the order of time. “ The first man who sought to propitiate the inimical and impenetrable powers of the air must have done it with certain outcries and certain gestures of self-abasement, and thereby he laid the foundations of liturgy and ceremonial. His first apparent success, observed by his marvelling and perhaps envious fellows, made a priest of him, and straightway theology was born ” (p. 4). This is plain enough ; we begin with a general belief in certain invisible “ powers ” ; then arises the desire to propitiate them, and from that the priesthood.

But so little does Mr Mencken care for consistency that, in the account of the origin of religion which he gives us from p. 17 onwards, he reverses the whole process, as we shall see. The deuterio-Mencken thinks of the first priest as a kind of magician, who manages to give the appearance of stopping a flood by beating it with a club. There are no “ gestures of abasement ” here ; he thinks of the flood as a sort of angry beast which you can drive off with violence ; he has no conception, clearly, of any “ powers ” before whom man must abase himself. So the priesthood begins, purely magical in character ; and Mr Mencken is anxious to make us believe that the whole idea of supernatural Beings comes later, a convenient fiction of the clergy.

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naïvetés afford to the faithful. He deserves an essay ; and if it be objected that to write a serious essay in answer to a book by an avowed humorist is to give yourself away—in common language, to have your leg pulled—I remain impenitent. It is quite certain that, whatever he meant by his book, many of his readers will have taken it as seriously as I do. Mr Mencken, to be sure, is less anxious to convince than to shock ; he has his reward, I imagine, when high-brow young ladies ask, “ Oh, Mr Mencken, how can you be so cynical ? ” But he has put his rake in the same garbage-heap which gives fuel to his broadcastminded *confrères* on this side ; and his use of it will repay study, if only by way of contrast with theirs.

The chief trouble about the whole performance is that he could not bring himself, at the outset, to make up his mind whether he was making an attack on religion or an attack on the clergy ; and, consequently, whether he had best represent us—the clergy, I mean—as fools or simply as knaves. The difficulty makes itself felt in his first pages. He explains that the generality of men is little addicted to religion, unaccustomed to making long prayers or taking any heroic measures in the way of piety ; “ thus the business of wrestling with omnipotence falls into the hands of specialists. . . . These specialists, by the method of trial and error, develop a highly professional technique, and presently it is so complicated and so highly formalized that the layman can scarcely comprehend it ”. This should mean, surely, that religion in its origins is a folly of the

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savage advances and beats the oncoming waves, and by a coincidence they recede. Accordingly, that particular savage is regarded as having special magic powers ; others try the same game on, and, when they are successful, they become the rivals of his reputation. Thus the priesthood recruits itself rapidly, while the going is good ; and enjoys a chequered career of popularity and unpopularity according to its success or failure. Then, presumably after a long patch of disappointments, one super-priest invents the notion of a god—a sleeping partner, on whom the blame can be laid when the spells fail to work, who can be represented as angry and offended when the offerings are not coming in well. These gods at first represented the forces of nature, a Fire-God, a Rain-God, and so on. With the beginning of agriculture, a Corn-Goddess or Earth-Mother tended to dethrone or at least to overshadow her multitudinous rivals. She in her turn was eclipsed by the Sun-God, who is described as “an old-timer suddenly clothed with a new dignity and power” ; why, we are not told. But the reason of his triumph over the Earth-Mother is evident ; matriarchy was just dying out. It has been killed by the monumental discovery, not hitherto made, that men had something to do with the procreation of children. Obviously, after that, a god, not a goddess, would be the favourite. And so we get on to Greece and Rome and all that period which is spoilt for the theorist by the tiresome existence of records. Since those records do not supply us with any facts particularly suggestive of priestly domination,

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It is a favourite trick of the American humorist to affect an inability to distinguish between cause and effect. "I next boiled the thermometer", Mark Twain says in the *Tramp Abroad*, "and got a most excellent result; the mercury went up to about 200 degrees Fahrenheit. In the opinion of the other scientists of the expedition this seemed to indicate that we had attained the extraordinary altitude of 200,000 feet above sea level". Just so, it is evident that Mr Mencken is only having his joke with us when he describes sexual irregularities as "acts which priests themselves, by their very character, are specially forbidden to commit, and hence feel to be peculiarly corrupting and obnoxious". The suggestion that the clergy are forbidden to make beasts of themselves for some obscure ceremonial reason, and "hence" are led to discourage the laity from making beasts of themselves, out of a kind of jealousy, is in the best vein of American humour. But this was a parenthesis; is it not rather bold of Mr Mencken to put the cart before the horse just as unmistakably, when he is in the very centre of his argument? And this is what he does when he traces the very origins of religion to priestcraft; inviting us to believe that the priesthood came first, by a kind of unlucky accident, and religion was only invented later, by the priests themselves, in order to save their faces when they had got into a tight corner.

Let us run through the Evolution of Religion, as it presents itself to Mr Mencken's sportive fancy. It begins, for him, with the Flood, or a flood anyhow. One bold

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thing, why in the name of fortune should we attach any weight to the opinions of Mr Mencken?

The truth is, of course, that the whole course of speculation outlined above simply originated in Mr Mencken's fancy, and, in spite of one or two apposite citations, bears no relation to anything we know, or think we know, about primitive man and his habits. Evidently he did not mean us to take him seriously, or he would at least have put up some show (like Professor Huxley) of following the approved authorities. He simply ignores them; "the concept of a single omnipotent god, reigning in the heavens in solitary grandeur, had to wait for long ages; and when it came in at last it was probably devised not by the theologians, but by the metaphysicians" (p. 89). Which is all very well, but does not go very far towards accounting for the survival of the idea amongst the Pygmies. With the conclusions of anthropology he is not going to bother; and in certain passages he seems to quarrel even with its methods. "The learned, in their speculations regarding the genesis of religious ideas in primitive man, would get further and fare better if they disregarded the dubious analogies presented by the thinking of relatively advanced savages, prehistoric or of today, and addressed themselves instead to an examination of the thinking of very young children" (p. 47). No doubt they would; very young children cannot speak, and therefore you can put on their behaviour any sort of construction which happens to suit your book, uncontradicted. But if Mr Mencken really

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we skip all that part and go on straight to the Middle Ages. And that is how religion evolved.

At the very outset of his argument, Mr Mencken falls foul of the anthropologists. "Among the learned", he writes (p. 30), "there is a frenzy to differentiate between religion and magic, and whole shelves of books have been written upon the theme. . . . Distinctions have been set up in great number, but, as it seems to me, to no useful purpose. . . . The point needs no labouring, for it doesn't make much difference what a thing is called, so long as its intrinsic character is clearly apprehended. Magic or religion, it is all one". Now, I do not see that Mr Mencken has appreciated the intrinsic character of magic at all. After the manner of his kind, he instances Transubstantiation as proving the identity; that is to say, it has escaped him, as it escapes Professor Huxley, that magic means something effected by a man, not something effected by God through the instrumentality of a man, acting as his minister. But what I am concerned with here is not Mr Mencken's ignorance of his subject, but the cheerful way in which he throws over his authorities the moment they begin to disagree with him. At one moment he will be quoting them with respect, and dishing up their opinions; the next moment, when he wants to strike out a line of his own, he dismisses them contemptuously as "the learned". Which raises the question—If Mr Mencken feels himself at liberty to attach no weight to the opinions of the anthropologists, who have after all devoted some attention to the

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themselves; the priest undertook to manage ; now, without a word of warning, we are introduced to a "shape" and a "presence", and told in the same breath that nobody, so far, had conceived the existence of gods!

There is, of course, a patent hole in the argument itself at this point. Granted that one man went and hit the flood with his club—and I see no reason to think it was more likely to be one man than a crowd of them—why should it be assumed that flood-stopping was the prerogative of that particular man? Why not assume, much more naturally, that any man could stop any flood by clubbing it? But I must not delay over the improbabilities of the story; I must confine myself to its inconsistencies. Why are we told (p. 52) that "the ghost was born, a sort of anthropoid ancestor of the soul" (with whole pages of discussion about the belief in ghosts), only to find (p. 57) that our author agrees with Leuba in thinking that "the belief of primitive man in the more or less limited survival of ghosts, still almost universal among savages, had very little relation to the belief of the so-called civilized races in the immortality of the soul"? If civilized men could invent a doctrine of the soul *in vacuo*, why not savages? Again (p. 80), we learn that "religions show a pull towards goddesses [rather than gods] as they decline"; and (p. 83) that "primitive society, like many savage societies of our time, was probably strictly matriarchal". Does he really want us to believe that matriarchy is unconnected with the prominence of female deities? Or is he hardy enough to suggest that the

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thinks the evidence provided by the observation of savage customs is so misleading, why is he for ever referring us back to it, when it tells in his favour? Why does he tell us (p. 59) that "Religion, in its first form, was naturally a very simple thing, and had no need of the complicated theologies which now adorn it. . . . It is so among savages to this day"? Instinctively, you see, he falls back on the jargon of a method which he has decided, ten pages earlier, to give up. I cannot help feeling that he must have put these inconsistencies in on purpose, to show that we were not meant to take him too seriously.

The inconsistencies abound. In his anxiety to identify the priest with the magician, he is compelled, as we have seen, to insist that there were already priests when there were as yet no gods. "To primitive man all things were natural. He did not think of waters and lightnings, winds and avalanches, as differing in essence from wolves and tigers; he thought of them as substantially identical to wolves and tigers" (who said Mr Mencken could not write English?) ". . . Thus the earliest imaginable religion, in the strict sense, had no gods" (pp. 20, 21). I thank him for that word "imaginable"; it throws a flood of light on his processes. But why not make his imaginations consistent? Why tell us, three pages later, that the priest was highly respected because he could control "the dreadful shape that rode the lightning and the baleful presence that caused the waters to rise"? Hitherto, we have been given to understand that it was the lightning itself, the waters

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who want to be shocked. And they will not see through it ; they will not realize that his excursions into an imaginary past are only the projection of the view which he takes about contemporary religions. They will read (p. 33) the words : " I suspect that the early priests, facing this dawn of the critical spirit, soon found themselves in the situation in front of Pius IX in 1870 " ; and they will murmur " Strange how history repeats itself ! " But it isn't history ; it isn't even pre-history ; it is just the shadow of Pius IX himself cast on the screen of Mr Mencken's imagination. By way of a parallel, let us suppose that we overheard a friend commenting on the extraordinary resemblance between the character of King Arthur and that of the late Prince Consort. We should reply without hesitation that there was nothing remarkable in that, since our view of King Arthur's character is derived from Tennyson, who deliberately wrote the part round the Prince in question. And this is exactly what Mr Mencken is doing all the time ; he is salting the mines of pre-history by laying there, out of his own invention, the precise trail he wants us to find.

His effects are heightened by a remarkable capacity for generalization. Thus (pp. 105 and following) he tells us—without quoting any authority—that the priests in ancient Babylon " lived on the fat of the land " ; that the priests of Egypt possessed glebe lands, and also exacted offerings, without giving us any statement of the totals involved ; that the Jewish priesthood in the time of the Maccabees " was so large that the temple revenues could not support

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same tendency can be a hall-mark of the primitive, and the evidence of a late decline? Incidentally, we hear (p. 22) of a hunter, in the very earliest days of priestcraft, who "paid a stiff fee for the protection of his wife and children". Yet, at a very much later stage of society, long after agriculture had come in, "the mother was the head of the family. Her relationship to her children was known to all, but the relationship of their father, for long ages, was not so much as suspected" (p. 83). And why do we come across "kings" on p. 25, if, much later, matriarchy was universal?

But there is no need for the fine tooth-comb. Anyone who reads through Mr Mencken's first two chapters with the slightest alertness will realize that they do not constitute an attempt to describe the historical genesis of religion. They may be compared to the Platonic myth, which is a device for teaching a philosophical notion by giving it a sham-historical form. Socrates in the *Republic* describes a quite imaginary development of political theory from aristocracy to oligarchy, from oligarchy to democracy, from democracy to tyranny, because that was how the thing ought to have worked logically, though in cold fact it didn't. It is not otherwise with Mr Mencken's speculations; there is no reason to suppose that they correspond with the history of the race any more than Rousseau's conception of the Noble Savage. Doubtless he would tell us himself that the whole thing was only a leg-pull.

But, unfortunately, most of Mr Mencken's readers, it is to be feared, are casual readers; those bright young things

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who want to be shocked. And they will not see through it ; they will not realize that his excursions into an imaginary past are only the projection of the view which he takes about contemporary religions. They will read (p. 33) the words : " I suspect that the early priests, facing this dawn of the critical spirit, soon found themselves in the situation in front of Pius IX in 1870 " ; and they will murmur " Strange how history repeats itself ! " But it isn't history ; it isn't even pre-history ; it is just the shadow of Pius IX himself cast on the screen of Mr Mencken's imagination. By way of a parallel, let us suppose that we overheard a friend commenting on the extraordinary resemblance between the character of King Arthur and that of the late Prince Consort. We should reply without hesitation that there was nothing remarkable in that, since our view of King Arthur's character is derived from Tennyson, who deliberately wrote the part round the Prince in question. And this is exactly what Mr Mencken is doing all the time ; he is salting the mines of pre-history by laying there, out of his own invention, the precise trail he wants us to find.

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it " (a different point, surely) ; and finally that in England, just before the Reformation, " the clergy " numbered more than 30,000 in a population of 3,000,000, and owned one-third of the land in the realm. It is difficult to see why the tenants were better off when their land belonged to some four or five hundred laity than when it belonged to 30,000 clerics. But let it pass ; what is the conclusion? " Thus, at all times and everywhere, the clergy have reached out for high and singular privileges, and always they have tended to increase up to the limit of communal endurance, both in numbers and in wealth ". Actually, we have been treated to the assertion, undocumented, that the priests of two ancient civilizations were rich, and reminded of the fact that among the Jews of one particular century and the English of another particular century priests were particularly numerous. And from this evidence, and no more, the universal conclusion is drawn. On the same page (109) it is used to illustrate the recent troubles in Mexico ; and Mr Mencken forgets to add that in that country, before the persecution, the priests were as one to several thousand in the population. Oh, Mr Mencken! Did you really think it was so easy to fool the public as all that?

But a certain carelessness about fact must be allowed to the humorist. Otherwise we should always be spoiling his best jokes by this captious sort of criticism. He has a long passage, for example (p. 73 onwards), explaining the emergence of the Sun-God into universal popularity at the expense of the Earth-Mother. He omits all mention of the

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Sky-God, so important in all Indo-European cultures—there is a taint of omnipotence about him which does not suit Mr Mencken's taste. And he bases his doctrine of the Sun-God largely on the popularity of Mithras, which is perhaps unfortunate; according to von Schroeder¹ "The Indian Mitra never was and never became a sun-god; the Persian Mithra did, but only in post-Avestan times". However, let the Sun-God pass; what about the statement (p. 77) that "Every Moslem, when he prays, continues to face the East whence the sun rises, just as every Christian goes to Church on Sunday"? Quite true, quite true; but does Mr Mencken expect us to forget that the coincidence is, demonstrably, a coincidence? Christians have been worshipping on the first day of the week ever since St Paul's time. When Teutonic influence reached Britain, *it so happened* that day x in the year n was the *dies dominica* of the Christians, was the Sun-day of the Northmen. It was awkward; it would have been much more convenient if it had been a Tuesday, dedicated to the old Sky-God, or a Wednesday, dedicated to the top god of the period, Odin. But it happened to be a Sun-day, and they really could not be bothered to change it. Whence Mr Mencken concludes that we go to Mass on the first day of the week in honour of the Sun-God.²

This effort of Mr Mencken's prepares the way for the

¹ Quoted by Schmidt, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 44.

² The same would be true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the *dies solis*, which has no place in the Roman Calendar till the fifth century.

whole of his next chapter, which is concerned with the "varieties" of religion. Actually, of course, it deals with the resemblances the various religions show to one another; already familiar to us from the writings of Professor Huxley and the rest of these original fellows; they are here set out in a long litany, whose exhaustiveness, it must be admitted, has a tendency to spoil the effect. It is very interesting, I mean, to draw attention to the fact that various pagan cults discovered the use of incense before we Christians did; but what ought we to have done about it? Ought we to have burnt vulcanite, by way of striking out a new line? And again, what are we to make of the statement (p. 138): "All peoples, even the lowest savages, approach their gods in attitudes and with gestures that differ materially from those of everyday life. So far as I can determine, this rule has no exception"? Curiously, he goes on to quote, from some common manual, the customs which (very roughly) determine the posture of a Catholic worshipper during High Mass. From unfamiliarity with his ground, he has not observed that these directions exactly contradict the law he has just laid down; for about 80 per cent. of the time occupied, the faithful are either sitting or standing, both quite familiar attitudes in common experience. Actually, it is curious how little kneeling has ever held the field as a posture of worship, except amongst Christians. But even if kneeling had been the universal attitude of prayer throughout all religions everywhere, what exactly would it have proved? There are only a limited number of positions

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which the human frame can adopt ; and that special positions should be adopted for special occasions, whether in Court or in Church, is neither surprising nor, as far as I can see, important in any way to our author's thesis.

He is on more familiar ground elsewhere, when he details more significant resemblances between Christian and non-Christian rites ; always careful, like Professor Huxley, to emphasize the similarities and keep a severe silence about the differences. Christians use beads to count the prayers they are saying ; so do the Buddhists ; therefore . . . The symbol of the Cross is used in Christian art ; it is also found among the relics of several early religions : therefore. . . . The ancient Aztecs celebrated a ceremonial and probably sacrificial meal, which reminded the Spaniards of their own Mass and Communion : therefore. . . . Therefore what?

Mr Mencken draws no conclusions. Or, rather, he does so occasionally, but not with more than his usual success. Thus he comments (p. 150) : " What lies under all this, of course, is an effort to exalt the office of the priest. He alone can be trusted to engage and persuade the higher powers in serious matters, for he alone speaks their awful and sinister language ". But when we turn back to find what " all this " was about, we are confronted by nothing more terrible than the short formula of Catholic baptism. " The ceremony is null unless the form indicated in Matthew xxvii. 29 is followed precisely : *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* ".

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But why should this be described as awful and sinister language? It is the language of any Catholic nursery. Baptism is valid, as Mr Mencken himself has the grace to admit, when administered by any person whatsoever, and any person whatsoever may administer it, if there is grave cause. What on earth is the use, then, of saying that only the priest can be trusted to do it? By a fatality which seems to dog him, Mr Mencken has hit upon the one sacrament which depends in no way upon the interposition of a priest.

How, in general, does he mean us to fill in his "therefore"? Ought we to say "Therefore it is evident that Christianity is only a development of other, already existing religions?" But we all know that; Christianity was a development of Judaism: It is hardly to be supposed that the Christian Church in the first century borrowed extensively from the religious notions of the Incas. There were the mystery religions, to be sure, but St Paul was quite conscious of the accidental resemblances here, and stressed them in his warnings against heathen practice: "You cannot eat of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils". At least, if he meant us to understand that the Christian religion derived from earlier sources, Mr Mencken should not have carried us off to South America. Or does he want us to conclude that, since all religions, to some extent, have the same stock-in-trade of mystical ideas—purification by ceremonial washing, incorporation by ceremonial eating, destruction or waste as the preliminary

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to oblation—therefore all religions are equally untrue? It is difficult to see how the most bigoted of unbelievers could draw that conclusion. In the first place, because only a very limited number of such ideas is possible, and it would be too much to expect that your one true religion should never overlap with the false ones. In the second place, because, if we assume that God did mean to reveal himself to the world, it was evidently fitting that he should encourage the use of symbolisms already familiar, rather than confuse men's minds with notions hitherto utterly strange to them.

What Mr Mencken would like to prove, and ought to be proving if he wants to show us that his thesis is worth anything, is that the ceremonies and rites of Christianity, like those (he would say) of other religions, were invented by priests in order to make money out of them, and in order to enhance the dignity of their own position. But it is just here that his argument is so weak. For, whatever he may say of the sixteenth-century Church in England, or of the nineteenth-century Church in America, it is quite evident that our ceremonies come down to us from times when our priests, far from deriving either dignity or profit from their calling, found in ordination only a short cut to the lions. Nor will it do to say that the ceremonies of Christianity, originally simple, were afterwards made more elaborate to glut sacerdotal rapacity; as he himself points out (on p. 153), the Holy Eucharist bears a resemblance to the rites of heathenism precisely where it is most primitive. He has

not the courage to *say* that our ceremonies were invented to make money out of the faithful ; so he leaves his readers to imply it.

The effect which the whole of this section creates, and is intended to create, is simply one of confusion. It is a smoke-screen designed to hide the true issues of religious controversy under a cloud of miscellaneous information. Jottings, arranged anyhow, about Aztec sacrifices and Indian hells, are pitched in out of the handbooks, to the delight of the broadcastminded public. Evidently, if Mr Mencken had really been writing a treatise on the gods, he would have been at pains to distinguish between the various types of religion and tabulate them in order—the monotheistic and the polytheistic, the immanentist and the transcendentalist, and so on ; there would be scientific grouping and arrangement. He has not bothered to do anything of the kind, precisely because he is not really writing a treatise on religion as such or on the different religions ; he is simply making an attack upon one religion, Christianity. By dwelling on resemblances and neglecting differences, by presenting the Incarnation as one among a series of theophanies, the Resurrection as one among a series of fertility-legends, you can hypnotize the reader into a state of fumbling agnosticism ; “ it would take me too long ”, he feels, “ to go into all this mass of detail ” ; he cannot see the wood for the trees. I do not know whether Mr Mencken talks on the wireless, but he has caught the method to perfection ; he dazzles by excess of light, nauseates the intellectual digestion with a

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surfeit of facts, and leaves the reader, from sheer weariness, disinclined to hear the word "religion" ever mentioned again.

This impression made, he gives us a fresh chapter on "Its Christian Form". I wish I had time to linger over all the glorious blunders which he manages to crowd into the twenty-two pages which he devotes to the Canon of the New Testament. He accuses the Gospels of inconsistency, and says in the next breath that they "show unmistakable signs of having been tampered with", not observing that if they had been tampered with to any good purpose the inconsistencies would have disappeared. Nor is he ever clear which charge he is bringing; he tells us (p. 207) that Luke's account of the Virgin Birth is inconsistent with his tracing the descent of our Lord through St Joseph, being plainly ignorant (no doubt he had not time to refer to the original) that in the latter passage our Lord is called "the son of Joseph as was supposed". He records a "gross contradiction between the flat statement credited to Jesus in Mt. xvii, that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of Elias the prophet, and John's own explicit denial in Jno. i"; if he would look up the former passage for himself, he would see that it is not a flat statement, but qualified by the caveat "if ye will receive it", the recognized rubric of a mystical utterance. Elsewhere he invents freely, as when he writes (p. 208) "Luke says categorically that the three stayed in Bethlehem until Mary's purification according to the law of Moses was accomplished"; let him look and

see. In defiance of the latest criticism, including that of Harnack, whom he elsewhere treats as an oracle, he dates the Gospels of Matthew and Luke after, not before, 70 A.D.; but he does at least admit them into the first century. Yet, in commenting on the last chapter of St Mark, he wants us to regard the words "Go ye into all the world" as a late addition by some zealous missionary, as if it added anything to the "Go and teach all nations" of St Matthew. Conversely, in commenting on the Trinitarian formula used in the last-named passage, he says, "Mark knows nothing of it"; forgetting that on his own showing the last verses of the second Gospel are only a stop-gap, and therefore what St Mark thought about it, one way or the other, will never be known.

Nor are his inconsistencies here confined to detail; they vitiate the whole process of his thought. He cites (p. 217) the passages in which it has been supposed that Matthew and Luke show a more complicated theology than that of Mark, without any allusion (here) to the contrary instances, where Mark seems to imply the Virgin Birth by giving us "Is not this the carpenter?" for Matthew's "Is not this the carpenter's son?" or where Mark, alone among the three, makes our Lord answer the high priest's question about his divinity with the unequivocal phrase, "I am". But that comes of trusting to the handbooks instead of reading the original. What even the handbooks ought to have told him is that the manuscript evidence does not impugn but proclaims the relative integrity of the Gospel

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text. He points out delightedly that a study of them "reveals nearly 175,000 discrepancies, mainly of a minor kind". He himself, on the previous page, has singled out the only three which are considerable in any way, and has only contrived to attach dogmatic importance to one among the three. Surely he must realize that the existence of the minor discrepancies is proof that our texts take us back to genuine archetypes? And that texts like "Thou art Peter" cannot be airily dismissed as insertions, when no single manuscript gives the slightest indication that they were ever wanting? He tells us the New Testament is so full of inconsistencies that even children in Sunday schools notice them: let me assure him that there are few children, at least in Catholic Sunday schools, who would not be fully alive to his own.

But there is no need to cross swords with Mr Mencken over a passage of which so little is his own that he has not troubled even to sprinkle it with those occasional blasphemies which his public expects of him. A further section, again only of twenty-two pages, in which he re-tells our Lord's life in his own way, bears more appearance of originality, if only from its startling inaccuracies. He does not even know the points on his own side; in dealing with the great Petrine text he airs his learning by adding "Greek *petros*" after the word "rock", as if the Protestants had not been shouting at us for four hundred years that the word is not *petros* but *petra*! Oddly, when he comes to the Resurrection he returns to a critical view, now some

hundred years out of date, in supposing that our Lord did not really die on the Cross, but somehow or other (he is generously careless about his details) underwent premature burial. How or why our Lord subsequently left the scene of his earthly labours, it does not occur to our author to inquire. One sentence I must quote, because it sheds a curious light on the spirit in which the whole passage was written. The question, what happened on the cross and in the sepulchre, "has been threshed out between the faithful and the sceptical for many a year, without bringing any answer satisfactory to all parties, or any hope of one hereafter; fortunately enough, we need not wrestle with it here". Exactly; it is enough to leave in the reader's mind the impression that certainty is difficult to obtain on all these subjects. He is not really expected to believe all the fantastic rigmarole of the Gospel according to Mencken; enough for him to realize that anybody, if he sets his mind to it, can make more or less what he will of the Gospel record.

If the treatment thus accorded to the Gospels is sketchy, that word hardly does justice to the fifteen-page chat which follows on the subsequent development of Christian theology, or the eight pages in which the whole history of the Church is told, from the Council of Nicea to the death of Calvin. We still feel occasional doubts about the scholarship of an author who attributes to Tertullian the words *Credo quia incredibilis est*; or the carefulness of a commentator who gravely asserts that St Paul "most of

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the time, like any other travelling evangelist, lived at his ease upon the country"—he is unaware, apparently, that this point has been discussed in the epistles. But once more the desired impression is produced; not that Mr Mencken has gone into this whole question of the Bible and found an unorthodox explanation of the whole, but that Mr Mencken could do so if he could bother to take the trouble. The whole thing is very uncertain, that is plain; or how could even Mr Mencken admit that he is not quite certain about it?

And so we reach "Its State Today", a critical estimate which occupies the remaining sixty or seventy pages. Here Mr Mencken is very much more on his own ground; few people are more alive to our modern tendencies, and few could be less restrained by any instincts of reverence or of reticence. For a moment it looks as if we were to embark on a really interesting document. He is determined to set the claims of the "modern world" in antithesis to those of Christianity; he writes forcibly, and with a kind of conviction. He realizes that the modern world begins with the Renaissance: it was brought in "not by the Reformation, but by the Renaissance, which preceded it in time and greatly exceeded it in scope and dignity". Mr Mencken is not unworthy to speak for that movement; I can picture him as a child of the classical revival, bitterly satirical of the clergy and secretly sitting loose to his ecclesiastical allegiance, at the same time far more contemptuous of the sectaries who preached the new religion. I

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can see him as a crypto-heathen, hobnobbing eagerly with Pico della Mirandola. But alas for the effects of journalism on the education of the modern mind! Carried away by the fatuity of an age, he must needs wreck his whole purpose and spoil his own contrast by representing the modern struggle as if it were a conflict between religion and science.

I do not believe that Mr Mencken cares a brass button for science ; if he were in the mood, I think he would laugh at science and at scientists as cheerfully as Mr Shaw does when the mood comes over him. But he is caught up by our modern *cliché* ; he follows obediently in the wake of Bishop Barnes. All through the chapter you see him as a man trying to unlock a door with a key that just does not fit. He is a neo-Pagan, pure and simple ; his quarrel with the Catholics is that they abominate birth-prevention, his quarrel with the Protestants, that they have introduced Prohibition. He is a pagan, even, to the extent of having an undisguised contempt for democracy. The Renaissance had nothing whatever to do with the advance of science ; nor was it with weapons forged by the scientist that Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot undermined (as he rightly sees) the whole intellectual system of Europe. He might have given some kind of philosophic expression (which it badly needs) to the modern spirit of revolt. Instead, he has allowed himself to babble about "science" like the cheapest of leader-writers, and the result is neither what he wanted to say nor what needed to be said.

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It is amazing that he should not have seen how he was travelling wide of the mark. On p. 306 he almost puts his finger on the point. After telling us that the Church "in the domain of ideas clings to the archaic speculations of Thomas Aquinas", he adds: "The recurrent effort to reconcile Platonism to the Christian system only serves to show how far the two stand apart. Plato, as a man of science, was surely cautious enough, but the Church has never been able, in any true sense, to take him in". If he had known anything about the history of thought before the Renaissance he would have realized that Plato dominated European thought for centuries after the time of St Augustine (who was saturated with him), and that St Thomas was regarded as little better than a heretic when he restored the lost dignity of Aristotle. An excellent theme for Mr Mencken, if he had not got it the wrong way round; for Aristotle was a man of science, which Plato never was; and it would have been easy (though quite erroneous) to represent this opposition of the older school as due to fear of Aristotle's strictly empirical methods. Plato would give no place to the natural sciences at all, except to astronomy, which Mr Mencken is evidently disposed to underrate (p. 304) because it is studied in Catholic Colleges. But Mr Mencken knows by instinct that there is something in him which has more kinship with Plato than with the Christian doctrine; it is Plato's intellectual aristocracy that calls to him, as it called to the men of the Renaissance. So he must needs spoil his whole argument by writing

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as if Christian thought had always been Aristotelian, and by dishing up Plato as a scientist.

It has twice happened that a leading theory of the scientists has found its way only with difficulty to acceptance by Christians, as such. Christian people, whether within or without the Church, were slow to accept Galileo's doctrine, because it contradicted a natural assumption of our minds which seemed, besides, to be guaranteed by texts of Scripture. And the evolutionary hypothesis was widely decried at first, and is still viewed with suspicion in some quarters, because the acceptance of it involved abandoning the idea of special creation which was formerly popular. From these facts Mr Mencken generalizes—others have done so before him, but never, I think, with such violence and pertinacity—a continual and inevitable conflict between the devotees of religion and those of science, so acute that the former, if they had had their way, would have blocked the progress of science at every conceivable turn. Has he any further instances to urge? Why, yes; it appears that Cardinal O'Connell, of Boston, was rash enough to say: "I have never yet met a man who understood in the least what Einstein was driving at". The data of this utterance is not given; but is it really very much to go upon? The views of one man, though he be a Prince of the Church, can hardly be held decisive, in the absence of any other evidence, that the Catholic Church or its leaders have taken up any particular attitude about Relativity whatsoever.

It is plain fanaticism; and the fanaticism flares up at

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every attempt to produce contrary evidence. It is no good to present Mr Mencken with the names of Pasteur and a dozen or so of other devout Christians who have made decisive discoveries in the scientific field. "Most of these men . . . were quite unaware of the damage that they did to revelation, and some of them, no doubt, would have been greatly shocked if it had been pointed out to them". And of Mendel we are told, "No man has ever slaughtered miracles on a vaster scale, or thrown more theologians out of their jobs". Yes, but how, exactly? You do not diminish but increase the need for theologians, if you provide fresh riddles for theology to solve. And the suggestion that "vaccination has done away with a great deal of prayer, and that priests have thus lost a lot of trade to medical men", whether it is a good joke or not (we must not forget that Mr Mencken is a humorist), does not further his argument. For he has undertaken to prove that Christians, and the clergy in particular, have always tried to thwart and decry the discoveries of the scientist. If he can prove that statement true of vaccination, or of electricity, or any of the other discoveries in question, let him give us his evidence. If not, the notion that the clergy have "lost trade" by the discoveries, were it not so childish, might be alleged as proof of their disinterestedness, since the protests were not forthcoming.

Faced with the difficulty of proving any facts, Mr Mencken takes characteristic refuge in pre-history. "We do not know who the revolutionist was who first set a

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broken leg, nor the first to launch a seaworthy boat, nor the first to calculate the length of a year, nor the first to manure a field. But of two things we may be sure ; that such men have always existed in the world, and that every one of their triumphs over nature was a priestly Thermopylæ ". Only a humorist could thus be allowed to invent facts, where facts are wanting, for the proof of his contentions.

As for Eddington, Thompson, and those other scientists who have deliberately tried to find some accommodation between science and the supernatural, Mr Mencken can hardly contain his anger at the mere mention of them ; they are traitors to his flag. And all the time he has no notion, and can give his readers no notion, why there should be any conflict between religion and science. Of course, the priests of those nature-religions which attached a specifically religious influence to the sun and to other physical objects, might well have been scandalized at their submission to scientific tests. But where exactly does the Christian religion stand to lose by fresh scientific discoveries? The only suggestion Mr Mencken has is that " soon or late the laws governing the production of life itself will be discovered in the laboratory, and man may set up as a creator on his own account. The thing, indeed, is not only conceivable ; it is even highly probable. When it comes to pass the theologians will be staggered, but I do not go so far as to predict that they will be undone ". I wonder, does he mean that the theologians would be stag-

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gered if some scientist proved the theory of abiogenesis? But the medieval theologians believed in it widely, and were not staggered at all. Or does he mean that, the thesis proved, we should be worried at some chemist's learning the formula for it? I cannot for the life of me see why. Nothing would stagger me about it except the extraordinary choice of language that would describe such a process as "creation".

It is all a terrible pity. Mr Mencken really looked as if he was going to say something worth saying; the New Humanism, which claims that "civilized man has become his own God", needs to have its point of view stated. And then this silly red herring of "science" is dragged in, and the true conflict of philosophies is obscured with familiar clap-trap. "There was a time when a man laid low by the ague sent for a priest and made a votive offering; now he sends for a physician and takes quinine"—what an antithesis! We might be pardoned for pointing out that it was the Jesuits who introduced quinine into Europe. But that does not meet the real issue, any more than Mr Mencken's dictum; the quarrel lies elsewhere. Indeed, indeed, journalism has much to answer for.

Meanwhile, the *Treatise on the Gods* leaves the reader with the impression that Mr Mencken does not like clergymen. He does not dislike them because they preach doctrines which are untrue; he will have it that their religion is untrue, because he dislikes them. I wonder, if Whelkleyanism got going, would he dislike its preachers any

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less than us? They would presumably get paid for their ministrations, and I do not think that he would pardon them for that, even though they did not believe in God.

Incidentally, Mr Mencken has omitted to consider the question whether a God exists or not. It is so hard to remember everything.

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I AM half minded to apologize for including Mr Gerald Heard in this gallery of worthies at all ; so different is his literary appeal from that of the others. I suppose that he writes for the same public, but he does not treat it with the same tenderness ; he plunges his reader, without apology, into the most abstruse considerations ; you cannot read him with any facility—at least if you mean to approach his work critically—but must continually re-examine his phrases ; continually refer backwards and forwards in the effort to discover what his thesis is, or how far he thinks he has advanced it. And, on the other side, it is clear that Mr Heard, whether from ignorance or contempt of our native idiom, expresses himself with the utmost difficulty in English prose. It is not only that his orthography is at fault, though this is painfully true. When we find “ logomacy ”, “ ælipile ”, and “ Dionysis ” (for Dionysus) (pp. 199, 205, 206), we might charitably assume bad proof-reading ; spellings like “ existance ” and “ Buddah ” might be due to Gallic influence. But when on p. 166 we read “ cousin ” for “ cozen ”, and realize that it is Mr Heard’s consistent habit to talk about “ a peninsular ”, it is difficult

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not to believe that we are entering on a new era of illiteracy, when all spelling will be phonetic, echoing as best it can the fruity tones of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

It is not, however, a mere matter of orthography and grammar. The whole construction of sentences is villainously mishandled, so as to ensure not only ugliness but obscurity. "The philanthropic, complex, counter-controlled society of today which the men of today are mainly agreed is, if not the final state of civilization, at least the latest step toward that goal, that society would have been as alien, distasteful and even impossible to the men of the past as their social forms are repugnant to us" (p. 22)—it might have been put better. And what exactly are we to make of this: "His sensibility refused to let him look on all the past mankind as means to his moment; and the same sensibility made that moment, as far as he himself was privately concerned, look painfully inadequate" (p. 12)? Sometimes the crabbedness seems deliberate; thus (on p. 70): "What part in a comprehensive chronology can have cosmetics?" All this does not make for easy reading; and there is reason to fear that if Mr Heard does not find an interpreter, his message will be neglected by posterity.

But not by the men of our own day. They know Mr Heard as a voice on the wireless, so familiar as to have attained an almost avuncular status. If, in that capacity, he holds the same views which he holds on paper, and manages to put them across in less confusing English, then assuredly he must be reckoned as one of the prime movers

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in that great conspiracy of mystification with which our age is confronted. No one is better able than he to bewilder the reader with a series of confusing impressions ; to impress him with an air of wide reading ; to present the wildest hypotheses as if they were facts ; to manipulate his evidence in the interests of a thesis ; to treat the modern age as something sharply distinct, in its whole outlook, from every age that has gone before it, and to base that distinction entirely on the progress of modern science. Yes, he is true to type, is Mr Heard.

Of course, in *The Emergence of Man*, he has a thesis to propose. And, of course, that thesis is meant to be a comforting one. The picture on the cover represents what Mr Wodehouse calls somewhere " a fairly nude chappie giving the dawn the glad eye ". As Lord Russell takes his point of departure from the despairs of Mr Krutch, so this other attempt to reconstruct the world takes its starting-point from the despairs of Winwood Reade. Did not Winwood Reade, long ago now, write a book called *The Martyrdom of Man*, and see in the disillusionizing revelations of the Spencerian philosophy the *coup de grâce* which was to complete that achievement? Long ago now, and plenty of ink has flowed under the *pons asinorum* since then. Mr Heard, like the good psychoanalyst he is, will not dispute these modern depressions of ours ; he undertakes rather to sublimate them. Let us sit down and tell Uncle Gerald all about it—or, rather, let him tell us all about it, as the psychoanalysts do.

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What, after all, is the loss of our hope in individual immortality? "History is the history not of men, but of Man; but this Man is something other than simply the acts of all men. This being is linked and links men not merely through their deeds; he is not an abstraction, but a being that is æon by æon growing in reality and making it more possible for men to find their fulfilment in him. The life of Man is vain unless this being lives. . . . Men can be satisfied with the idea of Man going on" (pp. 12, 13). I had not suspected that Mr Heard would be so much a Platonist. Indeed, he refers to Plato (p. 200) as "the poor old poetical mathematician". Yet here is Mr Heard himself asserting the reality of the Universal, in abstraction from its particulars, with a conviction Plato himself would hardly have dared to imitate. Not men, but Man, the Idea of Man, that which Man truly is, the Type laid up, not in Heaven presumably, but somewhere, possibly at Langham Place. We must return to this remarkable conception later, and consider how much solid comfort is to be derived from it. For the present we are concerned with it only as the key-idea of the book: Man is a psychological animal, and just as one might trace the psychological development of a single human being, so Mr Heard will trace the psychological development of the Race; which, if you view things rightly, is the whole of history. How Man's psyche emerged from its unselfconscious stage in the tree-tops to the highly selfconscious stage at which you find it in the psychological laboratories of today, shall be our theme.

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Others have recorded for us the history of states ; Mr Heard will confine himself to states of mind.

So the dear old dream of constructing a unified history reaches a new form. There have been so many attempts—history as dictated by geographical influences, history as dictated by the development of the warlike arts, history as dictated by economic laws, history as dictated by eugenics and natural selection, history as dictated by the reaction of population on the corn supply—all these histories have been written in their time, hailed as the latest thing, riddled with criticism, and suffered to sink into neglect. Mr Heard is less one-sided ; he does not propose to attribute all experiences of the human race to a single ultimate cause, but he will view them all under a single aspect. How did the mind of man react to the various changes which have taken place in his external lot ; how far was it permanently modified by that process ? And especially, how did that process help it to turn in on itself, to become more aware of its own processes ? The attempt is legitimate ; but it falsifies history none the less as it is worked out ; falsifies history, not by attributing the wrong effects to the wrong causes, but by setting the whole in a deliberately artificial perspective. And that leads, as we shall see, to manipulation of the facts. There will be plenty more of these books written ; others, besides Mr Heard, seeing the *Outline of History* popular, will wonder (not without justice) whether they are not as fully qualified for such exposition as Mr Wells.

It is not surprising to find our first chapter entitled "The

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Emergence of the Half-Men". Mr Heard begins by making three assumptions. He assumes, in the first place, the physical evolution of man, from what he describes as "an ape". He assumes, in the second place, that the human intellect has somehow evolved out of animal instinct. "The belief in progress . . . has this immovable foundation". It seems rash to describe as an immovable foundation a couple of scientific hypotheses, one of which is widely held, but still finds some to contest it, while the other is incapable of scientific proof, and involves the gravest philosophical difficulties. Nor is it evident why the doctrine of "progress" should be founded on that of evolution, since progress, as that notion is ordinarily understood, can be abundantly documented from human history. Nor can it be claimed—the claim was notoriously abandoned by Huxley—that the biological doctrine of evolution gives any ground for belief in progress, if progress is to be understood as implying moral improvement. But Mr Heard is too wise to linger over such details. I do not think he is really interested in moral improvement; his "progress" is psychological merely. But he knows that the ordinary reader will not suspect that; all generous instincts will rally to the familiar word, and the man at the microphone will carry his audience with him.

The third assumption is even rasher; it is that the evolution of man from an earlier type took place wholesale by a group movement; that a whole tribe of "apes" achieved human stature simultaneously, while other tribes, reacting

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on nearly the same conditions, almost achieved it but just fell short of it; "Dryopithecus and Sivapithecus are two types of super-apes produced at this time". Surely it would be safer to allow for the possibility that the human race descends from a single pair, as the result of a biological "sport"—an accidental exaggeration of some relevant characteristic? We should not expect Mr Heard to be conscious of the metaphysical contradiction which his theory involves; namely, that Mind, the nobler partner of our bodies, the half of all our experience, without which we could have no guarantee that anything exists at all, should have "evolved itself" or "been evolved", no other Mind hitherto existing, out of that inert mass which was to be the exercise of its faculties and the raw material of its cognition. But we might have expected him to be more cautious on the biological side. Biological science, in its effort to leave room for the gradual evolution of types, is drawing longer and ever longer drafts on the bank of time, and it is not certain how long geology will continue to honour them. Any theory which tends to short-circuit the slow process of mutation may yet be a godsend to the materialists.

But of all this Mr Heard is unconscious. He will picture to us, or rather he will insinuate to us in a couple of pictures, chosen at random, the slow movement of a purely Darwinian evolution. The former of these is surely much indebted for its atmosphere to the work of Mr Rice Burroughs. We are introduced to a pack of half-men doing a maypole-dance round the Tree, always spelt with a

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capital, which is still the dormitory of the pack at night. "It is a delight to hum and howl, running up and down the scale. . . . Arms and legs swing to the noise. . . . The rhythmic game, like a current, tumbles them; they are bathed and refreshed in the group gymnastic". A lion stirs in a thicket; the leader of the pack cries "Ugh!" in warning; "the hatred and disgust in his voice electrifies his hearers". The lion is stoned until it slinks away, amid general relief. "Stones, the good stones, were passed from hand to hand, were licked, mouthed, and cuddled. The dear Tree, it, too, was caressed. Tower of strength. How it uplifted and protected. Was it not theirs, was it not greater than anything else?" And so on. Good; excellent.

But, though the Tarzan-stuff may make snappy reading, anybody who sits down to consider whether it gets us anywhere will be conscious of its curious inadequacy. It is easy enough to invent an imaginary link in the series between man and ape, attributing to it habits not positively inhuman, yet not guaranteeing, at least from the outsider's point of view, the presence of any faculties beyond animal instinct. A few touches, noticeably the words "maypole" and "Ugh!" help to further the illusion that these creatures are one with ourselves. But the composite picture convinces not by evidence but by suggestion. The detective who "reconstructs the crime" does not do more, in fact, than reconstruct *his theory* of the crime; if the criminal is there, and is seen to blench, there is evidence to be taken

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into account ; if not, the performance can only be greeted by the ignorant plaudits of the gallery. Here, the criminal is absent ; we shall never know (I imagine) whether the human brain developed (if it did develop) its characteristics, before or after man left (if he did leave) the tree-tops. The force of the whole passage lies in its power of suggestion ; for a generation, it must be remembered, almost more accustomed to observing life as it is faked on the cinema than to observing life at first hand. The interlude of journalism tells, not because it has advanced the argument, but because it has arrested the attention. Has there ever really been a creature so un-ape-like as to produce a musical chorus, so un-man-like that its instinct is to climb rather than to run, so neither ape-like nor man-like as to feel a maudlin affection for its own weapons? Mr Heard has no more proved it than Mr Wells has proved the existence of men in the moon. . .

Several millennia elapse, during which the audience are requested to keep their seats ; a fresh reel follows. It features the interior of an Aurignacian cave. Aurignacian man is playing about with chunks (called nodules) of flint, which for no apparent reason he appears to regard as living animals, which " look at you like a toad " and " bite ". For a creature which has been heaving stones at lions these long centuries back, man does not seem to have progressed very fast. Now he manages to discover, rather late in the day, that flint cuts ; later, that it produces a spark. That leads, of course, to a fire, produced by accident, which

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makes the acorns in the neighbourhood taste better. We have got beyond Tarzan; we have reached the level of Charles Lamb's Essay on Roast Pig. Then somebody sees a stain on the rock wall which looks like a bison's head; he traces it out, to make it look more complete, and next day by good luck a bison is killed; so we enter upon the new phase of (i.) Art, and (ii.) Religion. The man who can draw is thought of as a wizard who can lure the animals to their destruction. It is all quite possible, just as possible as a hundred other theories of how those inventions were made, or what those pictures represented. But it is only a story. Cheerio, chicks; Good-night!

Somewhere about this point the reader will naturally expect Mr Heard to discuss the invention of language. After all, the book purports to be a psychological history of man, devoting special attention to the various stages in the process by which man arrived at full self-consciousness. And nothing, surely, marks us off more clearly from the beasts, nothing, surely, does more to determine our relations with other individuals in the society in which we live, than the power of exchanging ideas with them by means of speech. More than that, language itself reacts on thought, so that even today a newly-coined word will serve to precipitate thought; hence the slogans of our modern civilization—the word "slogan" itself is a word which has familiarized a thought, and perhaps given rise to a practice. Much more in the early days of our history language, with

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all its facilities for distinction and definition, must have served to speed up our intellectual development. What, then, has Mr Heard to tell us about it?

It seems quite incredible, but Mr Heard does not allude to the subject at all. The party who went round the mulberry bush were presumably brutes; their leader, to be sure, made use of the purely English word "Ugh!" but I doubt if he knew much of its meaning. Mr Heard tells us that it expressed hatred and disgust, but in the circumstances it is more likely to have been an utterance of terror. The cave-men, on the other hand, are represented as using comparatively developed language; the hunters ask the artist, "Have you seen bison today?" and he replies "Yes, in my mind I have them"; evidently we have set our foot already on the path that leads to Ollendorff. Now, would it not have been more sensible for Mr Heard to speculate a little on this, giving us some idea how language arose, and when, and whether in one place or in different places simultaneously, instead of indulging in tom-fool speculations about men dressing up in pelts and thus giving rise to totemism? The suspicion suggests itself that Mr Heard is not doing his job.

And the suspicion broadens—for there is plenty more evidence as the book goes on—that all Mr Heard's pretence of writing a scientific work is fudge. He does not really care a hang about the development of human psychology; he is out, like all the other omniscientists, to impress us and to confuse us. To impress us by throwing startling ideas

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at us that will leave us gasping and saying, "Well, I never thought of that before!" To confuse us, by blurring all our lines of distinction, and making it appear that one thing is very much the same as another when you start juggling with the labels. But the origin of language—that has been discussed lots of times before, from Plato's *Cratylus* onwards. Everybody who has thought about human history at all must have wondered for himself how this strange phenomenon of ordered speech took its rise. So Mr Heard leaves it out altogether; not because it lacks importance, but because it lacks sensation-value. "If that young man can think of things which never would occur to me."—so Bunthorne flourished, so flourish the omniscientists of today. And if a question occurs which has been the frequent subject of learned discussion already, why, they leave it out.

How much more interesting, for example, to speculate (as Mr Heard does on pp. 69 and following) about the instinct which leads human beings to adorn themselves with paint or even tattooing! Did you know that it was done with the desire of distinguishing themselves from their surroundings, defining their own bodies, so that they can reflect "This is me, and the part beyond is not me"? Consequently, that the practice of self-adornment arises when man is beginning to be conscious of himself as something separate from his surroundings? You didn't? Nor does Mr Heard; but it is a guess of his, or Freud's, or somebody's; and it is good newsy stuff, the kind of thing

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the public likes to get for its money. But a thing like language . . . oh, well, I suppose it just arose somehow.

The full men, whose emergence occupies Chapter II, are the ancient Egyptians. Occasionally Mr Heard seems conscious that he is devoting too much attention to a single geographical area; but "the description of Egypt . . . gives us the outline of all other early cultures" (p. 90); "if humanity is one, we shall find similar thresholds marking the entry into a new age in the history of Mesopotamia, India, and China. At present they are not known, so we must confine our attention to Egypt" (p. 113). Which is all very well, but it does not always work out; Mr Heard himself admits that the Incas never discovered the use of wheels, though they must have had the same transport problems as the other early civilizations. And this facile assumption that man, wherever you put him, will develop in much the same way, begs a very important question. The question, I mean, how much of similarity between different cultures can be put down to coincidence, how much can be accounted for by borrowing, and how much must date right back to an earlier period before the ancestors of those two cultures split off from one another. But such abstract discussions do not interest Mr Heard; you cannot put that kind of thing across. He is content to take his "facts" from the handbooks; generally, therefore, from the discarded theories of yesterday. He tells us a lot about the "Victim King" who has to be ritually murdered, and assures us that originally it was a Victim Queen, who was

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put out of the way when she was past child-bearing. He does not fall into the stupid archaism which prompts Mr Mencken to represent matriarchy as a primitive form of society ; he realizes that it belongs to a later and agrarian culture. But he is as Victorian in his idea that religion does not go back behind the agrarian culture, as he is pre-war in his supposition that totem-magic is the parent of religious belief.

But we must press on into history. Mr Heard still makes Egypt his centre of operations, naturally, since there is so much of monumental and even documentary evidence ; so much of Weigall. A little of this goes a long way with him ; he is ready to seize upon any incident, and give us a full account of all the motives, sentiments, and reactions connected with it. Indeed, at one point it looks as if he were going to hang up the action of the book altogether, and carve himself a niche in literature as the Guedalla of the early Pharaohs. I suppose it is really true that Amenophis II suffered from *ennui*? That he suffered from toothache can no doubt be inferred from the state of his mouth, and all our sympathies will go out to him. But, according to Mr Heard, his life was the tragedy of a misfit. "He found himself placed on the top of a heap of looted riches. . . . Why strive for more? . . . So possessed, so overwhelmed, so suffocated with plenty, it was a struggle just to live. . . . With plenty, the flame can be choked, desire can fail . . . the appetite may turn to nausea. It was this, the next phase of Natural Selection, the phase

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which 'concerns increasingly the whole of modern society, the phase we are doing so little to prepare against, which is the phase we can see dawning on the lonely Pharaoh who was raised 3,400 years ago to such a height of plenty, to such a limitation and restriction of every ordinary human aim through unlimited means, that unless he could find extra human interests he must die of inanition. . . . The only opening for one debarred from action . . . was an opening upward into acuter understanding and even more detached interest. This is the real strain of natural selection. Can we make ourselves new appetites when the original spontaneous ones that kept life going have been built up and staunched at their sources? Only Science as a philosophy can make man able to take that step".

In fact, the man was bored. I have quoted this passage *in extenso*, or rather I have selected the less unintelligible phrases from it, because I think it is the main part, and much the most interesting part, of Mr Heard's thesis. What he is really doing, quite evidently, is to take the mood of 1931, carry it back 3,400 years, and plant it out on poor old Amenophis. Whether the man himself felt as bad as that, even in the dentist's waiting-room, we can hardly know; you could not spell all that out in hieroglyphics. I hope to return to the lesson which Mr Heard is inculcating later on; what I wish to point out here is that, very much in the style of Mr Mencken, he is starting out to build up his philosophy on quite imaginary instances invented by himself. Not, I think, from insincerity, but merely from

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a desire to be original. You see, he could so easily have quoted phrases precisely to this effect, as Lord Russell does in *The Conquest of Happiness*, from Ecclesiastes. To be sure, he would tell us that the book was written, not by King Solomon, but by a Jew of the Captivity at earliest. Be it so ; a Jew of the Captivity is surely in a better position to judge what King Solomon felt like than Mr Heard is, in twentieth-century London, to judge what Amenophis felt like. The trouble is that King Solomon has been written up already, so Mr Heard must write up Amenophis for want of a better subject.

But all this is only leading up, in reality, to Mr Heard's hero, Akhnaton, the Heretic King. He earned the name by trying to abolish the multifarious other cults of Egypt, and unite the people in worship of the Sun-God. Accordingly, Mr Heard tells us that he "was the first individual". You see, Mr Heard is very keen about the group and the group-consciousness ; and anybody who breaks away from it, from the inherited traditions of the group, is for him of enormous importance. Still, you know. . . . The nomad, we are told, who worshipped the sun, went out and wandered in the desert. "He vented his baulked feeling in movement, and never speculated why it was obvious to him that the single god of the sun was the one true God. . . . But Akhnaton, becoming an individual in the heart of a complete society, had to become a theologian of the sun, to explain, if only to himself, the changed attitude towards worship, which was really awoken by his new individual

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self-consciousness. . . . All the old totem gods must go" (p. 130). If I understand my author aright, he means that the totem-gods of Egypt, being originally the symbols of the various racial groups from which the kingdom of Egypt was founded, stood for and reinforced group-consciousness; the first rebel, therefore, who was thrown up in the process of man's evolution reacted against them, he knew not why, and tried to make all his subjects worship the sun, the god of the great open spaces. Subconsciously, of course, but what else could you expect?

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona; I am not altogether convinced that because Akhnaton was the first king who, in the limited period covered by our records, is known to have quarrelled with his subjects in the matter of religion, individuality came into the world with him. Man "was raised from his slumber within the group, and henceforward he must go on until he can rise even further and see himself and the group, from a higher standpoint, made one"—that is, till he can listen in to Mr Heard. Was he really? What Mr Heard means, of course, is that Akhnaton was the first rebel; to call him the first individual is a mere misuse of terms; a man does not cease to be an individual by accepting, or even by accepting unreflectively, the traditions of his group. But we do not even know that he was the first rebel; nor, if we did, should we be in a position to analyse his subconscious motives. I wonder if even Mr Heard would have strayed off into so fantastic a digression if he had not been influenced (subconsciously, no doubt)

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by a desire to "cut out" Moses and the story of the Exodus?

Mr Heard's other hero is Psamtek, in whom I am delighted to recognize my old friend Psammitichus. And I am delighted to find that Mr Heard's admiration of him is based on the one story we all remember about him, we who were brought up on Herodotus. He took two babies from their nurses, as far as I remember the tale, and brought them up together under the care of a dumb nurse, so that they never heard the sound of a human voice. Thus he would know which was the original language of the human race. And when, presumably at no long interval, one of them said "Bekos", this was accepted as evidence that the Phenician or Egyptian language (I forget which) was the earliest, because it contained a word for "bread" with something the same sound.

I was never encouraged to regard Herodotus as a model of truthfulness, especially in the matter of Egypt. And stories like this, I was willingly led to believe, were just good stories invented by the old sages of Greece and fathered on well-known despots, much as jokes are fathered on Sydney Smith. But that was before the days of psychoanalysis, which has altered altogether our standards of evidence. Mr Heard not only accepts the story, but adds to it considerably; telling us that Psammitichus "brought up in silence so many male and so many female children", as if there had been a whole crowd of them instead of two; and that "he undertakes an investigation, the results of which

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he cannot hope to see for some years"—as if any human child was likely to get beyond three without saying "Be-kos". Mr Heard is all for it. "Think of the type of mind such experimentation reveals. First it has speculated on origins. . . . This is the first step to science. And he takes the second as well. For he initiates experiments. . . . Surely this is the second stage of the individual, of the growth of selfconsciousness and the emergence of the modern man". In a word, if you had put Psammitichus down at an American University, he would have felt at home at once.

I suppose it all depends on the point of view. Mr Heard evidently thinks that Psammitichus was a worthy forerunner of Freud and Jung, and there I agree with him. Only I think there was more excuse for Psammitichus, because he lived a long time ago. If indeed there is any truth in the story, which I doubt. But are we really to believe that men had never speculated about human origins before? Surely all the cosmogonies disprove that. Or that in the seventh century B.C., when the Pyramids had been standing and men had been paying their dentists' bills for years, the very notion of scientific experiment was a novelty? My own blood, I must confess, is more readily stirred by the exploit of Psammitichus's successor, who dispatched Phenician galleys to circumnavigate Africa.

Meanwhile, in some unaccountable way, the idea of individual morality had got about. Mr Heard is even generous enough to admit that in this Judæa led the way.

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He persistently falsifies the history of the Old Testament by writing as if the worship of Jehovah (whom he calls a sky-father) and that of the pagan fertility-gods were equally native to the Jewish genius, and perpetually at issue; disregarding the plain historical fact that the Jews, as might be expected of desert invaders, were worshippers of one God, and that their lapses into idolatry were only due to intercourse with the earlier inhabitants of Palestine. Thus (p. 136): "The Hebrews had at this date, when they were settled around Jerusalem, a mixed social heredity. Two dominant strains were present. The first was the strain they had from Egyptian sources. This was the religion of Fertility", and so on. But if you accept the story of *Exodus*, it is clear that the Jews left their Egyptian gods behind them in the desert; if you reject it, you have no evidence that the Jews were influenced by Egyptian religion at all. It is the familiar story of an invading tribe having to decide whether it will cling to its desert lessons, or make terms with the degenerate cults of the territory it has invaded.

But all this kind of thing does not interest Mr. Heard much; he does not even attempt, like Professor Huxley, to trace the stages by which monotheism developed out of monolatry. For in the Greek colonies a far more important influence than religion had made its appearance, that of money. Not that money appears for the first time at this stage, though possibly coinage does. But the lending of money for long periods, and the charging of interest on the

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loan, seems contemporaneous with the colonization of the Mediterranean ; perhaps Mr Heard gives the Greeks too much and the Phenicians too little credit for it. He hails the Greek tyrants, money-made men, as the heroes of commerce, and even contrives to institute a contrast between them and the Hebrew prophets, with their stern denunciation of oppression exercised by the rich. It is not difficult to see that Mr Heard's own sympathies, at this juncture, are altogether with the tyrants. Is not Periander the ancestor of the Rockefellers, as Psammitichus of Freud? One of his chief counts, later on, against the influence of Christianity is that the mediæval prohibition of usury delayed, for a time, the institution of modern methods of finance. It is a poor heart that never rejoices, and if Mr Heard can really look round him, in 1931, and thank whatever gods cannot possibly be for the glorious heritage handed down to us by way of Polycrates, Shylock, and the Rothschilds, let us not grudge him his cloistered seclusion.

In his treatment of the classical Greek period, he is more conventional. He is interested in the Law-givers, as a new symptom of human psychology, criticizes the old-fashioned traditions of Sparta, without noticing that they outlived, by several decades, the collapse of Athens, and spreads himself, naturally, over the rise of physical speculation which appears to have begun with Thales. He traces the progress of this speculation right down to Alexandrian days, and seems to regret that the steam-engine did not develop at once out of the æolipile. This preoccupation naturally makes

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him a little unsympathetic towards the more abstract tendencies of Greek thought; Plato, for example, and above all the moralizings of the Stoics. But oh, Mr Heard, why did you not tell us a little more about the Epicureans? Why not dwell a little on Lucretius, whose speculations about human origins are at least as plausible as yours? And why (still worse) no mention of the sophists and of the sceptics; of those daring pioneers who taught us, long before Freud interviewed his first neurotic patient, to distrust the processes of the human mind and the validity of human reasoning? "The universe remains unknowable, and man has proved that it must remain unknowable, by proving that he is an instrument constitutionally incapable of detached apprehension. Man has emerged into inescapable ignorance". That is the cry of triumph with which Mr Heard celebrates the final emergence of man; but he does not tell us that Thrasy-machus and his fellows thought the same, and came very much nearer to proving the same, two dozen centuries ago. *Percant, qui nostra ante nos dixerint*; it is the old story. Contradict the moderns, and they pillory you as an obscurantist. Anticipate them, and they suppress you in the interests of their own copyright.

It is part of Mr Heard's historical philosophy, I think—I wish he were more articulate—that the more highly developed civilization has always been open to successful attack from the less developed; that is, less developed psychologically. The intuitive man triumphs over the reflective, the brutal over the sensitive, the simple over the

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complicated. This must, I think, be the lesson of three very obscure pages he gives us (164-166) in which he seems to ascribe the downfall of the Minoan civilization in Crete—we have no idea why it fell, and ancient legend seems to have connected the fact with the outbreak of a plague—to the decadence of their art. Certainly he regards the Macedonian ascendancy in Greece as inevitable, because “the Macedonians were Greeks who had waited behind, both geographically and psychologically. They held on in the north under their own kings, preserving the primitive strength of their state, while their cousins went geographically south, and socially democratic” (p. 194). Since the Macedonian civilization went under before it had had time to get tired, it is necessary to represent the Roman conquest of the world as due to a series of accidents, quite unconnected with psychology. Not so the Roman decadence; this must be directly attributed to the undermining influence of that “mystery religion”—Christianity, in case you did not know—which taught men to look for the sanctions and rewards of their actions in a future world, and so made them incapable of dealing with this.

All that looks very well with a little literary garnishing, but when you come to look into it it is not really accordingly to schedule. Believe in the “psychological survival of the fittest”, and you will be hard put to it to explain why Rome did not go under in the first century of the Christian era. The whole literature of the period bears, unmistakably, the marks of a tired civilization; literature and art have reached

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their high-water mark, and have begun to decline ; society is altogether over-sophisticated and bored with its most elaborate pleasures. Never was there a moment when a civilization looked more ripe for dissolution ; in the event, it lasted out more than three centuries. When it collapsed, it collapsed under a simultaneous pressure of new populations on every side, quite sufficient to account for the death of the healthiest organism. And Christianity, the "mystery religion" which had hamstrung the military initiative of Rome by concentrating attention on a future life, proceeded to capture and tame those new, vigorous races which had overrun the Northern section of the Mediterranean world. Why did the "virus" which enfeebled Rome prove less fatal to the barbarians from the North? To be consistent with the whole course of his argument, Mr Heard obviously ought to say that the Roman civilization had already reached its psychological saturation point, whereas the Northerners were relatively a young and vigorous stock—which means that Christianity had nothing to do with it either way. And so he would, but for a momentary access of bigotry. Only by shutting both eyes could he fail to see that Roman society by the end of the first century was a decadent society, which Christianity came too late to save.

The fact is, of course, that the book, in order to implement its title, ought to have stopped about half-way through, just where pre-history merges into history. Man, as we find him in documentary records, is already a complete

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animal psychologically ; his make-up was determined before the curtain rose. True, he has varied, and still varies, in certain secondary characteristics ; in his sensibility, for example, to pain. Also, no doubt, as Mr Heard sees, in his capacity to act independently of his group ; but by a far subtler process than Mr Heard has envisaged. There is no general evolution of him to chronicle ; meanwhile, he has a history. And the key of psychology does not fit that lock, any more than the key of ethnology, or the key of economics. Nothing is inevitable ; or, if you prefer to say that whatever happens is inevitable, there is no general law to account for it. Chance (to give it an untheological name) continues to operate ; there was no reason in the nature of things why Xerxes should not have won at Salamis, or Hannibal at the Metaurus, and the odds were enormously in favour of Philip's being poisoned before he attained the hegemony of Greece. Conscious, it would seem, of more difficulties to come, Mr Heard leaves historical events to take their course, and during the last fifteen hundred years is content to record intellectual tendencies.

It need hardly be said that he narrows it all down to the conflict between science and religion. Heaven help us all, he falls back upon talking about science and religion. It has nothing whatever to do with his subject ; for the progress of our race in scientific research affects the content of our knowledge, not its form ; the object of our thought, not its processes. "The Age of Faith becomes the Age of Hypothesis"—it looks well ; but then, nobody ever

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suggested that our knowledge of the natural world did, or ought to, depend on faith, and the difficulty of basing our knowledge of another world on hypothesis is that the hypothesis unfortunately cannot be verified till we get there. No, there is no psychology in the whole section. But it is great fun.

Mr Heard, you see, will not follow the beaten track. He will not represent the Church, Mencken fashion, as absolutely and resolutely opposed to all the advance of learning; he will credit her with sufficient cunning to see the value of the new ideas, and to set about capturing and exploiting them, too late. Roger Bacon, who is generally quoted as one of the confessors of science, is to Mr Heard an emissary of the Popes, encouraged to pull the chestnuts out of the crucible for them. Hitherto, to be sure, the value of inductive methods had not been realized; St Thomas, the great philosopher of the Middle Ages, had been content to systematize existing knowledge, without trying to expand it. He inherited the Stoic tradition, according to which "the system is everything, and if facts do not support it, so much the worse for the facts. This is the attitude of medieval thought". So much, then, for the Dominicans.

We turn the page (249-250) without an inkling of the treat which awaits us. "After the Dominican order came the Franciscan". Mr Heard claims that "if we had no history of Europe but the history of the Orders we could diagnose its mental development by their evolution". But does not that make it all the more important, Mr Heard,

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to get the history of the Orders right? "After the Dominican Order came the Franciscan". . . . Mark, this is not some casual slip of memory, by which a man might forget that the actual foundation of the two Orders was as near as possible simultaneous. He really thinks that the Dominicans and the Franciscans represent two succeeding developments of medieval thought; the stage of mere obscurantism and the stage of free inquiry. He does not know that Roger Bacon was born ten years before St Thomas.¹ "The system is everything, and if the facts do not support it, so much the worse for the facts"; I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

But it was not enough for the Church, when her hour of trial came, to depend on the Franciscans, crouching over their test tubes. By the time of the Reformation "Man has emerged until what was explicit in his actions has become explicit in his mind; his faith has condensed into hypothesis. . . . He accepted the Universe, he accepted Truth, he accepted a new technique of discovery. . . . The Church realized that such an attitude was one of immense strength. . . . So reason should not be slighted. . . . After the Reformation, the Church had really to argue; and to argue with an informed adversary you must have knowledge. Therefore, the Jesuits are to know all that is to be known and constantly to find and to show that it

¹ Nor, of course, has he heard of St Albert, the master of St Thomas, whose anticipations of modern science are perhaps more remarkable than Bacon's.

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agrees with and confirms what the Church has already decided". There is really no limit to Mr Heard's power of making the facts fit into the system. One thinks of St Ignatius, almost in middle life, sitting down to learn . . . Latin grammar. One thinks of Campion at Oxford defending the thesis that the sky was made of crystal. Is it possible he does not realize that the issue of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was not religion versus science, but Catholic Faith against Protestant Faith? Does he really think that Suarez and Bellarmine had different theories about the nature of Truth from St Thomas? The Society has, to be sure, an honourable record of research in the natural sciences. But if Mr Heard would look up his facts, he would find that it belongs to this and the last century.

The fact is, Mr Heard has got the Galileo-complex. Like Mr Mencken, he is so preoccupied with the nineteenth-century debate over Darwinism that he is incapable of thinking himself back into a period when Churchmen did not view scientific research with suspicion. Thus (p. 263): "The Church was nervous. . . . When the growing medical faculty wanted to dissect dead human bodies, the Church would not give leave". This, apparently, at the beginning of the Renaissance. It would be easy, by mere reference to an Encyclopædia, to contest the facts: "In the first century of the Christian era, the dissection of human subjects was forbidden, under heavy penalties. . . . Galen dissected apes . . . as there was a law at Rome forbidding the use of dead bodies. . . . Anatomy made small progress

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among the Arabs, which is accounted for by their religion prohibiting contact with dead bodies. . . . The university of Montpellier was founded by Pope Nicholas IV in 1284, and the chair of anatomy was filled by Bernard Gordon. . . . The science continued to be studied by surgeons such as . . . Berenger, who boasted of having dissected at Verona more than a hundred subjects". It is difficult to see why the Church is credited with hostility to surgery, except that Vesalius was made to do penance by a visit to Jerusalem; but this was for cutting up, not a dead body, but a live one. However, the importance lies in the argument, not in the facts. Whatever hostility was shown towards anatomy in its early days, is it not clear that it arose from a very natural human dislike of seeing one's fellow-men mutilated after death? ("Paupers" were the invention of a later and more enlightened era.) And the Church is called to account as if she had discouraged anatomy *for fear that its discoveries should be injurious to the faith.*

Of Protestantism Mr Heard is hardly less contemptuous than Mr Mencken; he dismisses it in three pages, without enthusiasm. It is perhaps a symptom worth noting that the omniscientists are plainly more worried over the persistence of one ancient superstition than over that of its less intransigent rivals. To the last, Mr Heard is warning us against the Jesuits, who are "not only all disciplined to resist all argument; they are, many of them, fully learned in the most modern psychology". But the Reformation movement does not seem to attract him, which is a pity,

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for, whatever the rights and wrongs of it, it is clearly of the highest psychological interest. It produced a swing of thought towards subjectivism, which has made possible, not modern science, but our modern introspections, and notably psychoanalysis. And here is an amazing feature, even in a book which has burked all discussion of Greek scepticism; you will search the text in vain for a mention of Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Mill, or any of the modern philosophers, except for one casual quotation from Spinoza. Is it possible Mr Heard does not realize that the new psychology has terrors for the thought of our generation only because that thought is already half-paralysed with doubt of its own processes; and that the reason, humanly speaking, why the Catholic body offers a stouter resistance to the poison is because our minds are steeped in the tradition of a realist philosophy? I am afraid, once more, that Mr Heard has been guilty of an omission, not because he disapproves of the Idealist philosophers, but because they have spoiled the pitch for him. If "Man has emerged into inescapable ignorance", he very nearly did it once before, with Hume to thank for it.

Instead, we are treated to a curious disquisition, first against the Industrial Revolution and then against Bolshevik Russia. The Bolsheviks are credited with the notion that science is the handmaid of communism, just as once she was thought to be the handmaid of theology. According to Mr Heard, she is as tired of her new situation as she

was of the old, and it can only be a matter of a few years before she gives notice. So he destroys the last of our illusions, and presents us triumphantly with his conclusion, which is that "The universe remains unknowable, and man has only proved that it must remain unknowable by proving that he is an instrument constitutionally incapable of detached apprehension". It is almost an insult to the reader's intelligence to point out the fallacy. If man is incapable of detached apprehension, how can he prove anything? And if he cannot prove anything, how can he prove, as Mr Heard thinks, that he cannot prove anything? A criticism he would have found used, if his reading had gone further, as early as the fifth century B.C. Pitiless in our scepticism, we others are not content to stop short at doubting our own mental processes. We go further, and doubt Mr Heard's.

I have spoken of his conclusion ; but actually he gives us two more pages of comfort: He thinks all our modern unrest is due to the fact that we live in a transitional period ; when the world has reached its " classic period ", that is, " its secondary phase of comprehensive conclusions, and of a perfect interpretation, a completely harmonious reaction, then the scientific cosmology will result and be fulfilled in an appropriate social action ". This Utopian forecast is, to tell the truth, a little vague at the edges ; and, of course, it is not final ; we shall only have completed a stage, and then we shall have to break up all our certainties and start again. Man is always reaching these dead ends ;

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we know that, because the records of the Minoan civilization, if they had not unfortunately perished, would probably tell us so. How we are ever going to reach comprehensive conclusions or a perfect interpretation when we have admittedly reached a state of inescapable ignorance, I do not know, and Mr Heard is not going to tell us. He has achieved his object, if I am right in saying that the object of the omniscientist is always to reduce his public to a state of nescience. Einstein has proved that the universe is out of the straight, and Freud has proved that we never think what we think we are thinking, and Frazer or somebody has shown us that it was all a false alarm about God—what are we to do about it? We have got beyond the age of faith, beyond the age of hypothesis, into an age of pure assertion, without proof, in which we sit down and listen to the expert and wish we could learn to talk like that. The best we can do is to die; and if we are good, Uncle Gerald will tell us some bed-time stories while we are about it.

I am only wondering why, in his preface, Mr Heard undertook the *rôle* of comforter; or how he came to imagine that his curious philosophy of history would dispel that sense of emptiness which some of his contemporaries share with Winwood Reade. It is bad enough to be told that there is no future life; that we must still go on ordering our lives thus and thus for the sake of our descendants, entering into a conspiracy with Mr Wells for the happiness of the Unborn. But Mr Heard does not even encourage us to think the Unborn will be happy; there will be only

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alternating "classic" periods of intellectual satisfaction and "romantic" periods of intellectual unrest, *per omnia sæcula sæculorum*. We are not to live, then, for the sake of men or for the sake of mankind, but for the sake of Man, the Type which must fulfil itself. I hope I shall not be altogether singular in suggesting that I do not care a tinker's curse, in that case, whether it fulfils itself or not. No, but it will, says Mr Heard, in spite of you and your likes. Be it so ; but that piece of information is nothing to live by ; it gives no comfort to the questioner. I do not see why men, real, living, concrete men, should have endured in every age a million agonies to give artistic satisfaction to Mr Heard. Let us wish him a long life, that he may survive to see the next phase of human experience. I do not pretend to guess what it will be, but I cherish the certainty that it will give him, and all the prophets, a nasty jolt.

THE HEGIRA FROM STAGIRA

I HAVE long been expecting that somebody would write a book on the lines of Mr Langdon-Davies's *Science and Common Sense*; I am only surprised that somebody has not done it better. The formula of it is simply Agnosticism by Einstein out of Freud; I do not think any of us will live long without finding that "Relativity" has become as much a catch-word in the theological debates of our own time as "Evolution" was in the time of our grandfathers. But Mr Davies, it seems to me, has not made good use of his opportunities; he flashes a good deal of scientific information in front of us, but always without contriving to relate it to the point he wants to establish. He regards his book, for some reason, as an attack on Aristotle, an author whom he gives no evidence of having consulted. And, as my friend Mr Arnold Lunn has published, not long since, a book called *The Flight from Reason*, I have made bold to parody his excellent title and inscribe this chapter "The Hegira from Stagira".

Science and Common Sense—yes, one can see how something might be made out of that. We should argue that, so long as science went hand in hand with common

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sense, *was*, in Huxley's phrase, organized common sense, it was impossible for us to doubt the laws which governed human thought. How could we doubt them, when they had achieved results so gratifyingly tangible? And these same laws could be used by the metaphysicians to infer the existence of a God of free will, of personal survival after death. But now that science, apparently following out these same laws, has fallen foul of common sense, finding it necessary to treat space as curved when we know it to be straight, and make time an extra dimension of space, when we know it to be nothing of the kind, can we be certain any longer that the laws of human thought are valid? Evidently they have proved themselves valid up to a point, but is it not possible that beyond that point they simply lead to nonsense—nonsense of the kind this fellow Jeans talks? And if by following the laws of thought this fellow Jeans is led to talk palpable nonsense, may it not be that Aquinas, for example, or Bishop Butler, was talking nonsense too? Let us stick to common sense, and allow the theologian and the higher mathematician to pursue, each in his own sphere, the unsubstantial bubbles of pure thought!

It need hardly be said that this is not Mr Davies's line of country at all. His is a mind which moves unwillingly amongst abstract considerations; and, although the word "reality" occurs on almost every line of his work, he is sparing in his use of the word "truth". In a curious passage (pp. 20, 21), he undertakes to show us how an understanding of contemporary science helps to the attain-

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ment of human happiness. This happiness involves "the establishment and exploration of a united kingdom of the mind. . . . Here it would be intolerable to disagree about the nature of the external world". And he amplifies this point elsewhere (p. 17) by explaining that science helps us to escape from intellectual loneliness. "So long as a man is steeped in his common-sense views of the world and its nature . . . so long will he be separated in thought from his neighbour, whose common-sense opinions will be different and at variance from his own. . . . We want to live in the same world as other people and not to find ourselves apart from them in thought". All this, I confess, is Greek to me. I rather enjoy differing from other people's opinions, especially from Mr Davies's. The only reason I can conceive of for wanting to know what are the conclusions of science is a desire to know the truth. To seek any other companionship than that of the truth is the mark, surely, of an intellectual coward.

Which might also be urged as a reason for wanting to be abreast of other kinds of speculation—in metaphysics, for example. Here I doubt whether I should carry Mr Davies with me, for he seems ignorant of their very meaning. "The old-time village atheist", he writes (p. 56), "believed that metaphysical arguments were the sort of superstitions from which good hard science was sent to save the world; but . . . science cannot get on without true metaphysics. . . . True metaphysics is mathematics". And as an example of "this metaphysical knowledge, this mathema-

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tical truth " he gives us the statement : " If anything has a certain property, and whatever has this property has a certain other property, then the thing in question has the other property ". Take it out of tangle, and that sentence reads, " All A is B, all C is A, therefore all C is B ", a straightforward syllogism in Barbara. What on earth gave Mr Davies the idea that a syllogism in Barbara was mathematics?

Anyhow, faced with a choice between science and common sense, he votes for science and tells common sense to go and be hanged. This involves him in the curious necessity—the underlying fallacy of his whole book—of supposing that the arguments in favour of religion are built up, not out of thought, but out of " common sense ". And his idea is to establish his thesis by giving the following impressions :

(i) Euclid was an old Greek, and his views Einstein has proved to be nonsense.

(ii) Aristotle was another old Greek, so his views must be nonsense too.

(iii) Christianity was invented in the Middle Ages, when people thought a lot of Aristotle.

(iv) Therefore Christianity was founded on a false basis, and must be untrue.

(v) Therefore one can have as many wives as one likes simultaneously.

That is not, of course, the precise way in which he argues. But it is the kind of *Stimmung* he wants to create in the minds of the kind of people who will read him. The sort of thing

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he is thinking about is the fact that Aristotle knew very little about the tiger (for example), and that that little was all we knew about the tiger for more than a thousand years after his death. (In his earlier book, *Man and his Universe*, Mr Davies gives a very amusing picture of various animals as medieval artists used to portray them.) It is hardly necessary to point out that the logic of the argument would be more cogent if it could be shown that the medieval conceptions of the next world were in any way based on the medieval conceptions of this. Mr Davies makes no attempt to do so ; he simply repeats an inaccurate statement in the hope that his readers will come to believe it. Thus, in discussing the moral law, he treats it as something which we can " get rid of " if it does not make man happy. He says : " To the Aristotelian schoolman the brute fact that God created the universe according to a natural and a moral law seemed to be proved from scientific observation. . . . The organized common sense of their day put God and good along with mass or force or matter as brute facts of the universe, real as a rock or a star, and more real still " (pp. 228; 229). It is not difficult to see that this is just nonsense. If the moral law was deduced by an earlier philosophy merely from " scientific observation " of the external world, how did that philosophy ever conclude that a man ought to have only one wife, when it was evident that a stag kept a whole harem? The moral law was exactly as assailable as it is in our day, when St Thomas debated with the Mahomedans.

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They say it is a bad workman who blames his own tools. And I cannot help feeling that Mr Davies lays himself open to that criticism when he prepares the way for his attack by quarrelling with the "tools" which we use in the investigation of nature, and chiefly with the powers of the eye, and the power of speech. It is true he evades the issue by treating "eyes" and "words" as if they were the tools of common sense, whereas the tool of science is mathematics. But he cannot really get away with it like that. Even if you define reality as a set of mathematical relations, those relations must be verifiable in external fact; otherwise your mathematical system will be no better than a chimæra bombinating in a vacuum. And in order to verify results, even an Einstein must depend on evidence provided him by sight and the other senses. Further, if science is to be communicable, it must be communicated in language; figures are only a convenience, and when we write 1, 2, 3, we are in fact using the words "one, two, three". Eyes and words, then, must be tools of science, as of common sense; and common sense, no less than science, demands that we should use them as accurately as possible. Thus in his first attempt to create a radical distinction between science and common sense Mr Davies is guilty of an obvious confusion.

I cannot resist dwelling a little on this section of his argument, because it illustrates so delightfully his own method, and that of the omniscientists in general. It is hard to know whether we should admire more the inade-

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quacy of the grounds on which his rather trite conclusions are based, or the inaccuracy with which those conclusions are stated.

MOST of us would be content to agree that the human eye is not a fully adequate instrument for scientific purposes. It is no news to us ; after all, the Greeks evolved a theory of atoms centuries before we had any apparatus for detecting the molecule. What need was there to put in a whole section in illustration of the point? Primarily because Mr Davies, after the manner of his kind, felt it was time to impress us with a little of his superior information ; he rushes at once into a description of how sight evolved, in the familiar "Did you know that . . ." strain of the omniscientist. He tells us that the amoeba behaves oddly if it is subjected to a strong light ; it either dies of it or heaves itself out of the way. Very interesting, to be sure ; I must ask to see that next time I stay with the nuns in Glasgow, by whom, I understand, amoebas are chiefly bred. Next, we are told that the earthworm, though blind, is somehow sensitive to light, so that it crawls underground when the dawn comes to be out of the way of the birds ; did you know that? Then (p. 30), Mr Davies brings himself up to the fence, and refuses it. "From a bunch of light-sensitive cells gathered together in one place to the human eye is of course a long journey, which it is nothing to our purpose to follow in detail". Precisely ; neither Mr Davies nor any other man can bridge the gulf that lies between unconscious reaction to the influence of light and

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the phenomenon of *seeing* ; there is no common term under which we can embrace them, no intelligible link we can interpose between them. Mr Davies has a look at the difficulty, and stalks majestically by. What has he proved, meanwhile, or what does he think he has proved? Why, that the eye is an organ gradually called forth by the needs which met animal life in its struggle for existence, and therefore we must not expect it to be adequate for any other purpose ; it is a practical convenience, no more.

At this point, most unexpectedly, our author has a slight lapse into Paley's *Evidences* ; he begins to talk about what the eye was " designed " for. " With none of these eyes . . . is there anything to suggest that they are designed or suitable for any other use than that of helping their possessors to survive ", " an implement which has been designed and used for millions of years to touch off nerves " . . . etc.—what is all this talk about design? From whose Mind did the design originate? I was familiar in childhood with a hymn beginning " Let dogs delight to bark and bite ", which contained the phrase " Your little hands were never made to tear each other's eyes ". Is it in this sense that Mr Davies expects to be understood? " Your little eyes were never made to spot each other's atoms "—would that represent his meaning? Apparently not, for elsewhere he writes (p. 30) of " chance improvements, lucky accidents in the development of sensitivity to light enabling individual animals to do better than their less fortunate companions " ; what is the sense of invoking " design " at one moment,

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and attributing the same effect to lucky accident the next? Observe, if you believe in an all-wise Providence you can think (though it is bad theology) of such a Providence deceiving us for our own good. It would have been a kindly thought, for example, to let us see events an instant or two before they happen. But if you pin your faith to the action of a blind selectivity in nature, what imaginable reason is there to doubt that the eye which has the greatest survival value is the eye which is most accurate, that is, best equipped for seeing things as they really are ; the lamp-post, for example, where it is, and not a yard or so further off than it really is? Surely if blind chance rules everything the chances are against the blind?

Even if it were certain, then, that the eye had been developed only for survival purposes, that would be no reason for doubting that it is an accurate instrument as far as it goes ; rather the contrary. But is it certain? The eye is the servant of the brain, and we know how quick servants can be at imitating their masters. During the thousands of centuries that have elapsed—so we are assured—since man took to flint implements, has the human brain been developed only by the struggle for existence, or has it taken its own direction in multitudinous ways? I should like to know what answer Mr Davies would give to that question. If he replies that the brain, like the eye, has only been developed by the struggle for existence, then I will retort his own argument on him ; in that case the brain, like the eye, has only a survival value ; it has been

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“designed and formed” for a certain set of uses, merely practical ; how then can we be certain that it is adequate for an entirely different purpose, the discovery of speculative truth? And if it is not adequate, the whole of Mr Davies’s thesis falls to the ground ; the brain may be at fault when it determines the mathematical relations which to him are “reality”, just as the eye, he tells us, may be at fault when it sees things in three dimensions. There can be no further use in arguing about this or any other subject. But if he replies that the brain has taken its own directions, I should like to know why the human eye may not have developed equally in those same directions ; developed a faculty of seeing things, not merely as it is useful for us to see them, but as they really are?

Actually, my quarrel with him goes further back than all this. I would admit that the eye is an inadequate instrument in so far as its faculties have a limited extension ; cannot see, for example, the exact outline of a thing that passes close to it at the rate of two hundred and fifty miles an hour. But I would not admit that the eye ever deceives us. In his anxiety to dethrone Aristotle, Mr Davies should at least have examined the Aristotelian maxim that the senses are never deceived over their proper objects. If he had done so he might have realized his own blunder, which is to confuse seeing wrong with putting a wrong construction on what we see. He says, for example (p. 32), “Our eyes tell us that we move up and down in a world of three dimensions . . . there is no reason from that alone to

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suppose that the real world has three dimensions". But is it "our eyes" which give us the information? Mr Davies would not be impressed if I quoted Aristotle at him; let me quote Professor Huxley at him instead. "When we say that a ball which we see in the distance is spherical, we are basing this statement on the frequently repeated evidence of our past experience that objects which appear to the eye of a particular shape and with a particular kind of pattern of light and shade are, when explored by touch, found to possess a particular shape which we call spherical" (*Religion without Revelation*, p. 24). If Mr Davies will submit to the labour of reading through that sentence, he will see that the identification of an object as a sphere means the use, not only of our eyes, but of that "common" sense, as Aristotle called it, by which the deliveries of our various senses are correlated.

And this point is of the highest importance for the whole argument. When we think we see a dog coming towards us, and afterwards find that it is a sheep (Mr Davies's illustration, on p. 34), we are not correcting the evidence of our eyes by the evidence of common sense. We are correcting the evidence of common sense by the evidence of common sense. The whole nerve of Mr Davies's argument is, "Science sometimes contradicts common sense. Thomas Huxley was therefore wrong in telling us that science is organized common sense; for common sense, however organized, can never contradict itself. Therefore we must cling to science and reject common sense

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altogether". But, in fact, as we see, common sense *can* contradict itself; it does so, whenever we are in the process of revising our opinions about the nature of things. And Mr Davies's conclusion does not follow.

Mr Davies is equally, though perhaps less significantly, at sea when he takes, as his second instance of an untrustworthy tool, human language. Of course, the discussion of "words" gives him a fresh opening for his omniscientism; he tells us that the Zulus have separate words for "my father", "your father", and "his or her father" (which I think rather sensible of them); and that the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego, though I suppose bars cannot be common in those parts, have a single word which means "to look at each other hoping that either will offer to do something which both parties desire, but are unwilling to do". You did not know that; nor did I. But it has nothing to do, really, with the question whether words are a danger to thought because they express it so inadequately. Nor does he make it much clearer what he is driving at when he attempts to give an instance in point, choosing for that purpose the name "Smith". Now, here I can play the omniscientist in my turn; I doubt if Mr Davies knew that there are 530,000 Smiths in Great Britain, but there are. And if you mistake any one of these Smiths for another, or any one of the 4,800 John William Smiths for one another, that is a good instance of the way in which words can mislead us. But Mr Davies says nothing about all this; he writes: "Our feelings about words may obscure

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the truth about the thing to which they refer. The name Smith is unchanging; the man Smith is constantly and radically changing all the time", and so on. But this is not to make a mistake about words; it is to make a mistake about the ideas which the words express. It is our idea of Smith that is, doubtless, too inelastic; we think of him as a man whom we met at the club, and are surprised when he gets sentenced for forgery. But it is not the *word* Smith that has misled us; it would affect us with no surprise to read that *somebody else called Smith* had been sentenced for forgery. It would be hard to imagine an illustration less fortunately chosen.

So far, in fact, Mr Davies has not been advancing his argument; he has only been telling us what we knew before, and telling it wrong. But he has doubtless achieved his object, by plunging the ordinary reader into a profound distrust of all he has ever learned or believed. It is the smoke-screen of incense which is to confuse the eyes of the worshipper before he is led into the Holy of Holies. That this is his aim our author confesses ingenuously enough. He begins his next chapter, "The Tools of Science", by assuring us that "If the preceding pages have had any effect on the reader, it will have been one of increasing his agnosticism. . . . This is as it should be" (p. 46). If you are only out to confuse, it does not much matter whether your actual arguments will bear investigation. He carries on the good work by a brief discussion of reality; after describing (very inadequately) what the plain man means

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by reality, he tells us that "no such reality as this must be expected from science itself. . . . The layman must abandon all such associations with the word *reality* before he approaches the reality of science. . . . When the scientist speaks of reality he means something quite different from all everyday uses" (pp. 50, 51).

That is all very well, but it bids us pause. I cannot resist referring once again to the undergraduate who was asked what Aristotle would have said if he had seen a cow with five legs, and answered that "he wouldn't have been such a — fool as to call it a cow". Is there really *nothing* in common between what the ordinary man means by reality and what the scientist means by reality? If so, it is difficult to see how the scientist is to form any views about the ordinary man's "reality", or to discuss (except in the crude school-essay manner of Mr Davies) whether such reality has any existence. Difficult also to see why the two things go by the same name, if they are absolutely different; or why we should attach any conceivable importance to something which Mr Davies prefers to call "reality", if it has nothing to do with that reality which we have hitherto conceived. He has proved too much, by making the word merely equivocal. He should have reflected that there is something in common between the term "bantam" as we use it of a man and as we use it of a fowl; the word "race" as we use it of a sporting event and as we use it of a nation. He should have shown us, or attempted to show us, what is the relation between that reality which

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man desires to know and that which he succeeds in knowing.

In any case, he wants us to take it from him that reality, scientific reality, consists of a number of brute facts and the relations between those facts, which can always be expressed in terms of a mathematical formula. The brute facts themselves are, and will always be, unknowable; no research will ever enable us to say what they *are*; all we know is that they *behave* in certain ways, and it is their behaviour that the formulas express. In the last analysis, the brute facts in question are a series of electric charges, which underlie the atom; it may be that one day we shall push our inquiry further and analyse the electric charges themselves, but in that case whatever it is that underlies them will be mere "brute fact" once more. All this is well said, though it is difficult to see that modern science differs from the science of our forefathers except that the process of analysis has gone on further. Did the scientist ever profess to tell us what things *are*? If so, his claim was baseless; for the best he could ever do was to define things by their properties, and that meant by the way in which they behaved. You may call a thing an acid or an alkali, for example, but who is to tell us what an acid or an alkali *is*? We only know them by their reactions. It is unlikely that any intelligent person will want to quarrel with Mr Davies's statement, though he appears for some reason to regard it as a paradox, that for the scientist the only knowable reality is what things do to one another. When he

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adds that "what things are, whether they exist at all and why, are questions which are of no importance whatever, and fortunately so, since they can never be answered or even profitably discussed by the human intellect or any super-intellect either", we note that this is Mr Davies's opinion; but I confess I find it difficult to see why he should father such opinions on "the scientist", since, whatever the scientist as such knows or does not know, it is very evident that science does not qualify him to pronounce on the questions which occur in the inverted commas.

The tool of science, then, as opposed to the tools of common sense, is mathematics. And Mr Davies is, of course, justified in claiming that this is a tool of finer temper. It is a matter of common sense whether a colour is blue or green, yet two men may argue about it, especially by an artificial light, without coming to a conclusion; but the value of that particular shade on the spectroscope is a matter of fact, which will present itself to all minds alike. We should agree, there, with our author; though whether he has a right to be so certain about mathematics, when he is so uncertain about everything else, is a different question. As we have seen, he disqualifies the evidence of our eyes on the ground that the human sight is only meant to have survival-value; and he says the same about words: "Words were constructed to help us with the job of surviving in the struggle for existence" (p. 55). But, goodness gracious, does he really forget that mathematics, in their origin, had precisely the same intention? If we

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may trust the legend, Palamedes first invented mathematics to help the Greeks with their struggle for existence in the Trojan War. Be that as it may, it is surely evident to anybody that the science was practical before it was speculative ; and I cannot for the life of me see how Mr Davies would deal with some captious adversary who, taking a leaf from his own book, should maintain that we can have no certainty whether mathematics are a guide to the truth ; all we know is that they have been a useful hypothesis to work on in the needs of everyday life. Further, since Mr Davies believes that it is a question of no importance, and one which cannot even be profitably discussed, whether things exist or not, how is he going to persuade us that relations between things have any objective existence? For a relation to subsist without the substances which it related would be worse than the survival of the grin after the disappearance of the Cheshire Cat.

But, while we may question whether Mr Davies is consistent, we shall not be inclined to question that he is right. Modern science has achieved remarkable triumphs in the way of measurement ; and in doing so has reached a degree of certitude which may well leave the layman astounded. And if modern science has authorized Mr Davies to act as its interpreter when he gives us to understand that things which cannot be measured do not exist, that will do no great harm from any practical point of view, for science is only concerned with things that are measurable, and is only concerned with them in so far as they are measurable.

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Let us leave him to abound in his own sense, and press him for his reasons in telling us that science and common sense are necessarily at variance.

His strong suit here, of course, is Einstein. In his chapter called "Space" he undertakes, not indeed to enlighten us, but to endarken us on this subject. "We cannot hope to understand much about the actual conclusions reached. For us it is the path taken that contains the significant material" (p. 73). "To the layman this is probably all of Einstein's labour that can be profitably followed out in our direction. . . . If the new ideas about space are of any practical importance to us it is not because of the actual conclusions to which they lead, but because of their effect on our attitude towards the workings of our minds" (p. 99). Mr Davies, as I read him, is only concerned to humble us with the knowledge that, in one department of science at least, that of physics, our old common-sense judgments have been superseded; therefore we are to distrust our old common-sense judgments in all departments of knowledge equally, and sit quite still while Mr Davies tells us what he thinks about God, the soul, and all the rest of it. We are too stupid to understand Einstein, but even fools such as we are can see that Einstein has made nonsense of common sense.

I am bound to confess—and Mr Mencken must try to forgive me—that even after reading Mr Davies's chapter my unmathematical mind fails to understand Relativity. But I will not labour to expose my own stupidity; I will

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concede the postulates of Relativity, I hope, to Mr Davies's satisfaction. What I still question is whether the physics of Einstein cannot, like the physics of Newton, be legitimately described as "organized common sense"; with the proviso, of course, that the former must be regarded as more highly organized than the latter. Mr Davies, I observe, in commenting on the Euclidean axiom about parallel straight lines, writes "Is this self-evident? Nobody has ever felt that it was. Can it be proved? Nobody has ever found a proof. And yet it lies almost at the very base of all Euclid. It is one of those common-sense and obvious things which only a philosopher would find worthy of worry" (p. 87). Now, assuming his account of the facts, is it not clear that this is a case in which our common sense went wrong, and needs to be corrected *by a fresh application of common sense?* Of this Mr Davies himself seems conscious when he writes (p. 95): "We were only able to abandon this common-sense view when we realized that imbedded in Euclidean geometry were suppositions which were not necessarily true, however common-sense they seemed to be". *They seemed to be*—that implies that they were not. And is not common sense continually occupied in correcting the notions which seem to be common sense?

If my eyes report certain impressions on the horizon of the desert, it seems to be common sense to say that there is an oasis yonder. But common sense, more highly organized, may assure me that what I see is a mirage; it still looks like an oasis, but I know that it is not. If I

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have a fever and feel hot, it seems to be common sense that I should get into a cold bath ; organized common sense tells me that I ought to go to bed with a hot bottle. Common sense seemed to tell us that, if it got colder and colder the further you went North, it must necessarily get hotter and hotter the further you went South ; here again organized common sense comes to our rescue. So it does when we ask why the cars at Brooklands do not fall over. And—perhaps an even more relevant consideration—must it not have seemed common sense at one time that, if the earth was spherical, its remoter part must be uninhabited, or else the people would have dropped off? The doubt occurs to the minds of most children, I suppose, until organized common sense teaches them the theory of gravitation. Common sense has corrected common sense.

I submit, then, that if Einstein's notions continue to hold the field, and other men do not shake his conclusions as he has shaken Newton's, it will be just as much "common sense" to our grandsons to think in Einstein's terms as it is common sense to us to think in Newton's. I say, to our grandchildren ; to us, who have been brought up at school on other principles, there will always be this apparent conflict between science and common sense, but it will only be apparent. We are merely staggering under the first blow ; and Mr Davies artfully tries to convince us that the whole ground has been cut away under our feet.

But observe how artfully. Modern physics, you see, have no use for absolute time or absolute space ; they must

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always think of time in terms of space, space in terms of time ; so much so that, by a process of thought obscure to the layman, some of our prophets have identified time with the fourth dimension. To Mr Davies, it need hardly be said, this means that absolute space, absolute time, do not exist. "Absolute and empty space is beyond the dreams of science and has no reality whatever ; since we have already seen" ("seen" is good) "that reality means relationship between things ; and, clearly, absolute and empty space cannot have relation with anything else" (pp. 84, 85). And he represents the modern physicist as saying : "For my purpose . . . I find the common-sense things called space and time useless and misleading ; I can only complete my task by substituting for them various symbols and formulæ which I shall regard as referring to something it is convenient to call space-time. . . . Further, since I call my mathematical description of the universe 'reality', I shall say that common-sense space and time are unreal and but shadows or emanations of the only real space-time" (p. 106). And, having pointed out that it is impossible to establish absolute simultaneity in time by any experiment, because two observers cannot communicate with one another with strict simultaneity, he concludes that space and time "turn out to be shadows, that is, subjective ideas, which would make all science impossible, because no two observers can be trusted to agree in their measurements of them" (p. 108). Now, on all this a philosopher might have two words to say. "For my purpose", "I

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can only complete my task ", " I shall regard as ", " something it is convenient to call "—is it thus that truth is ascertained? And is it not possible to conceive, legitimately, the idea of two events as simultaneous, although it may be impossible to make an observation to that effect, just as it is possible to conceive, legitimately, the idea of a straight line, although probably no draughtsman has ever drawn a line which would be straight if we could see it under a sufficiently powerful microscope? But I will leave the philosophers to defend their own quarrel ; my purpose is not, like that of Mr Davies, to confuse, but to apply considerations of common sense.

The important thing, after all, is the conclusion Mr Davies wants us to draw ; and what is that? Plainly, that if we cannot trust our ordinary judgments when they assert the existence of an absolute space and an absolute time which science repudiates, so those judgments are at fault when they assert the existence of other absolutes, truth, for example, or beauty, of which science is equally incognisant. " The stages which man goes through in his understanding of space are analogous to those through which he goes to understand his emotions, his ideas of good and evil, and his judgment of human conduct " (p. 99). " Common sense misleads us absolutely with regard to the nature of both space and time. . . . Nothing in this tells us what time is ; it merely warns us once more that common sense is a useless guide to reality " (p. 109). Certainly it is not difficult to see what the gentleman is getting at. But has he

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forgotten, or is he merely trying to conceal from us, the fact that space and time are things wholly unique in our experience? That Kant saw; he would not confuse them with the deliveries of our reason, nor yet with the deliveries of our senses; space and time were conditions of our perception, imposed on us we knew not how, but quite on a different footing from anything else, our notion of causality, for example, or our notion of right and wrong. Lie back in your chair, and think of space as going out endlessly, endlessly; does that satisfy you? Think instead of space as having, somewhere, a limit, and then consider what happens outside that limit. Or think of eternity, forwards or backwards; think of the alternative, a time when time is not. All that makes the brain reel, why? Because when we think of space and time we are not dealing with the concepts of reason; we are looking into the very conditions of our ordinary perceptions. Time and space, be they what they may, are unique; and, consequently, when you have proved that our ordinary judgments about time and space may be wrong, you have not established any probability that our ordinary judgments on other subjects may be wrong. For your subject-matter is different.

No, no, Mr Davies, it will not do; you were trying to lead us up the garden. It is not true that "if we accept the attitude that . . . space and time are subjective ideas . . . the world of senses is not the real world" (p. 109), for our senses give us no contact either with time or with space. It is not true that "the stages which man goes through in

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his understanding of space are analogous to those through which he goes to understand his emotions", etc., etc.; you have produced no evidence, and there is no evidence of such an analogy. And, sure enough, when you come to discuss, later on, "God and good and happiness and beauty", you do not refer back to your earlier argument about space and time; you simply relegate these conceptions, without argument, to the world of make-believe. In other words, you assume it as axiomatic that whatever cannot be investigated by science cannot exist. But if you were going to assume that, what was the use of all your disquisitions about Einstein earlier on? They have contributed nothing to the argument.

Actually, it will easily be seen, all the Einstein part was only put in to confuse us. We might hope that we are getting to business at last when Mr Davies passes on, in his next chapter, to matter. Here at least there is some hope that he will cross swords with Aristotle. And, indeed, he appears to be under the impression that he is doing so. "Our morals and religions were built out of the Aristotelian conceptions of the nature of matter and the material universe and the abandoning of those conceptions paves the way to new morals and new religions" (p. 129). "The new ideas of matter . . . undermine the whole attitude towards the stuff of the universe out of which"—the attitude, I take it, not the stuff or the universe—"the Aristotelian world-picture was made. And that means that the religion and ethics which were built with the Aristotelian world-picture

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as foundation are left hanging perilously in mid-air" (p. 137). Quite. But would it not have been a good idea to give us some account of what the Aristotelian world-picture was, and how, exactly, anybody ever "built" a religion on it, or how any religion ever "depended" on it?

There is one passage in which Mr Davies attempts to do something of the kind. It is where he tells us, on p. 116, that "all medieval thought, including its religion and ethics—which are our religion and ethics today—was saturated with this belief in a world made out of four elements". Now, it is not to be disputed that the ancients did think of earth, air, fire and water as irreducible elements, and that sometimes they built quaint superstructures of scientific belief upon these premisses; St Hilary informs us, for example, that salt is made out of fire and water, I have no notion why. But, torture my brain as I will, I cannot see where our common notions of religion and ethics are based upon one form of physical speculation rather than another. If somebody discovered tomorrow that it was all a mistake about atoms and electrons, and that after all there was not and could not be anything smaller than a molecule, I should not find my faith in any way strengthened, or the work of Christian apologetic one tittle easier. I can see why people think that Galileo has made the world harder for Christianity, or why Darwin has made the world harder for Christianity; I cannot for the life of me see how my friend Henry Moseley or any of those scientists who have followed

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up his researches into the nature of the atom have made the world harder for Christianity.

Matter, Mr Davies keeps on assuring us, cannot be seen. "Matter itself is invisible unless it is releasing energy, and even then it is the released energy and not the matter which is visible" (p. 127). Is there anything very subversive about that? The medieval philosophers, approaching the question from a metaphysical point of view, believed in a distinction between "matter" and "form", of which two factors all substances in this visible universe alike consist. They did not believe that "matter" itself could be seen except in conjunction with a form. The modern scientist, approaching the question from the physical point of view, thinks of matter as something which perpetually eludes our observation, a mysterious x whose behaviour we study because we cannot study the thing itself. Are the two points of view so entirely irreconcilable? An angel, we are told, has form without matter; does it shake our faith in the existence of angels to be told that matter is unknowable? It is all very well to tell me that the chair I am sitting on is in reality a mass of whirling electrons, but it is I who am based on the chair, not my faith. St Thomas never told me that it was not a mass of whirling electrons; and even if he had, and I was now forced to disbelieve him, I should not therefore conclude that his speculations about the nature of God were equally inaccurate. For the life of me I cannot see what all the trouble is supposed to be about.

The alleged issue between science and common sense is,

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from this point onwards, almost forgotten, though we were given to understand that it was the subject of the book. Chapter VII, on "Life", makes the most, indeed, of biochemistry, but does not even attempt to show that modern science can bridge the gulf between the inorganic and the organic, or between vegetable life and conscious life, any more successfully than the science of an earlier day. "Grass is flesh and flesh is grass alternately, crops and fruits around us become the bodies and blood of the animals and men walking among the trees today" (p. 150)—all this is no more startling than the flippant song which told us of "the roses with their posies fertilized by Clementine". On the other hand, Mr Davies is compelled to admit that you cannot state the phenomena of organic life in terms of mere machinery without doing injustice to the facts. "As for soul, there does seem to be a principle of force which moulds these cells in growth and action and compels them to follow their destiny as mere parts of a whole" (p. 154). From which it will be seen that his biological notions do not significantly differ from those of his fathers before him.

The only way in which this chapter attempts to advance the argument is by dwelling on the comparative unimportance of human life in a universe so vast in its structure. I have met this kind of thing before; and once more I rub my eyes in bewilderment over the thesis, developed on pp. 140, 141, that living matter, and *a fortiori* human life, must be relatively unimportant because it is so rare.

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“ With the possible exception of Mars, astronomy knows of no body likely to have any kind of material for a biologist to study ”. I suppose Mr Davies will accuse me of being unduly wedded to common sense ; but really I can find nothing but encouragement in that suggestion. It gives me a feeling of affectionate patriotism towards the solar system when they tell me that here alone, in this tiny corner of the universe, organic life exists. Mr Davies, of course, hastens to assure us that the existence of life is “ dependent upon an accident ” ; but this is to use question-begging terms. Science has no instruments by which it could conceivably discover whether a rare phenomenon is due to blind chance or to a supernatural providence ; the effects of either cause will obviously be the same. All science can tell us, if it will be candid, is that the accident is an uncommonly rum kind of accident. If, in the long history of this vast universe, the thing has only happened once, how enormously the chances must have been, we may argue, against its happening at all. But I am afraid Mr Davies will think me painfully anthropomorphic. “ The universe ”, he tells us, “ must be assumed to love all its children equally ” (p. 141). “ To ourselves it is doubtless more important to be alive than to be magnetic . . . but the universe as a whole, cherishing its children equally, can hardly be said to devote its life to one more than to the other ” (p. 143). “ The universe, were it to write its memories, would certainly devote a chapter to this ”—the emergence of the protoplasm—“ . . . but it is doubtful

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whether it would deserve a whole new volume". That is his attitude.

I hope it is not very rude of me to ask who is being anthropomorphic now? I deny that the universe loves all its children equally, because I know that the universe has no children, and that it does not "love" anyone or anything at all. I am not going to assume that it "cherishes" anything; it does not devote its life to anybody, nor has it in any intelligible sense a "life" to devote. And I see no use in speculating what the universe would do if it wrote its memories, because I know that it can neither read nor write. It is because man can love, and cherish, and devote himself, and write, and do all those things which the universe cannot, that I am prepared not merely to regard him as the most important thing in the universe, but to deny that (apart from theology) there could be any such thing as "importance" in the universe if man did not exist.

But we must not delay too long over Mr Davies's sickly sentimentalities about the universe. Let us hurry on to his chapter about Personality. Here I feel he would like to have said something; I mean, to have said something and proceeded to substantiate it. He does say something; he says (p. 162), "All the psychological entities about which we talk in everyday life whenever we discuss ourselves as conscious beings—consciousness itself, mind, emotion, will, reason, conscience—all of them are false". Just like that. Now, let us pass the others for the moment; what does a man think he means when he sets down on

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paper the words "Consciousness is false"? I can understand that consciousness is not "real" in his sense of the word reality; because he will only apply that term to phenomena which are susceptible of statement in scientific formulæ. But is there any creature in the world who will not agree, when faced with the issue, that if a man's definition of reality is such as to exclude consciousness from its scope, that is so much the worse for his definition?

Actually, the pace becomes too fast for Mr Davies whenever philosophy is involved in the discussion. Hastily he extracts from a handbook a list of six different philosophical attitudes about the relations between body and mind, and leaves it at that. "Far be it from me to draw any invidious distinctions between these holy men; with more profit we shall devote ourselves to a list of the kings of Israel and Juda". Mr Davies, in the same spirit, devotes the rest of his chapter to Freud and the Behaviourists, with the general idea of showing that the will, at any rate, has no real existence. What reason is, or mind, or consciousness, he omits, perhaps wisely, to consider any further.

"It would be false to suggest", he writes (p. 179), "that psychology has reached the stage of building a logical structure such as that of the physicist". That is very certain; but it is to say too little. The false suggestion which Mr Davies is making throughout the chapter is that psychology will ever, in the nature of the case, be able to rank as an exact science. He does not deny that its conclusions are still tentative; what he conceals is the fact that its

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methods are, and will always be, uncertain. For this reason, if for no other, that a human being is not a suitable subject for the dissecting-table of the psychologist except when he is acting unconsciously ; let him devote a moment's thought to what he is doing, and the experiment begins to go wrong. But what Mr Davies would like psychology to do is to explain, by formula, the actions of the conscious man ; and here you cannot experiment, you can only tabulate and guess. Mr Davies makes a great deal of Pavlov's experiments ; his proof, for example, that the salivary glands of a dog could be excited by the sound of a bell which it was accustomed to associate with meal times. Lord Russell gives a much fuller account of them in *The Scientific Outlook*. But it is difficult to see that these experiments, valuable as they are, have gone beyond expressing in the form of laws principles which were already accepted as guesses. We know that ideas do get associated in the unconscious mind ; do observations of that kind afford us any help when we are dealing with the higher levels of consciousness ? And it is here that the psychologist fails to convince. Mr Davies assures me, for example, that " in most men there is a tendency to marry or fall in love with women who bear a definite resemblance to the mother " (p. 184) ; and refers later to " the obvious fact that the child-mother relationship influences and often dominates the later man-woman relationship " (p. 186). Now, in the first place, I do not admit that the principle is true. I look round vainly among the married couples of

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my acquaintance for any suggestion that it is true; if anything, my experience is rather the contrary. A man's wife often bears a resemblance to his mother-in-law, naturally; but I do not see why this should endear her to him. Further, I do not see how the principle *can* be true; for if it were it is evident that womanhood would be falling more and more into a set of rigid types, preserved by selective breeding, and I see no sign that this is happening. And in any case, even if the observation were accurate, I cannot see how the inference that the child-mother relationship "influences" and even "dominates" the man-woman relationship can be referred to as an obvious fact, when it is only a guess. The dominating influence might easily be not the association of early ideas, but some obscure trait handed down to the son by the mother.

Moreover, whatever the new psychology is worth, I cannot see that for Mr Davies's immediate purpose it differs in any way from the old psychology. He writes of "the common-sense view that a separate entity situated in the head registers and controls another separate entity called the body" (p. 167). Whereas he wants us to believe in the influence of glands, etc., situated all over the place. Be the truth what it may, surely it is evident that for centuries upon centuries before the new psychology was born or thought of men have believed in the existence of "humours" in the body, whose "temperament" (we use the word still) was supposed to rule a man's natural tendencies, and the weaknesses against which he would

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have to struggle? ¹ One was "choleric", another "melancholic", and so on; let Mr Davies read Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* before he tells us that "common sense" puts the seat of all human passions in the head. Or let him read the Bible, for that matter, and see how regularly the passion of love is associated with the bowels.

No, the real issue is simply that Mr Davies, in the last analysis, is a determinist. He does not state this in so many words, but he implies it in a series of sentiments which can hardly be *obiter dicta*. There might be room for doubt when he describes mind and protoplasm as "equally conditioned by the nature of matter"; but doubt disappears when he tells us that reason is "at the mercy of conditioned reflexes", and "at best must be regarded as a giant in chains", and that "the motive of all action is inherent in the whole past history and the whole present situation of the individual" (pp. 170, 177; 181). If Mr Davies would read Aristotle instead of writing about him he would discover that the largest possible allowances are made in the *Ethics* for the influence of habit on action; only, Aristotle claims that each act makes a tiny addition to the strength of the habit, for which the will is responsible. And the non-existence of that addition is something which the new psychology tends to assume, not something which it has proved.

Having assured us that all our acts are fully conditioned

¹ According to Lord Russell (*The Scientific Outlook*, p. 52), Pavlov is inclined to rehabilitate this very ancient doctrine.

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by our past history and present situation, Mr Davies, with a fine inconsistency, devotes a fresh chapter to the question "What May I Do?" Evidently, if his notion of the human will is accurate, the question is without meaning; we can only turn helplessly to the psychologist and ask him, "What am I likely to do?" And indeed, as a contribution towards the discussion of ethical theory, the chapter has very little interest. It starts from a standpoint which makes moral action impossible; it is bolstered up by statistics which every priest, as a matter of common experience, knows to be mendacious. The only criterion of action which it recognizes would appear to be "the laws of emotion". In the world of make-believe, Mr Davies writes, "we wish to arrange the facts of experience so as to build up a consistent picture in conformity with the laws of emotion" (p. 203). Since there are no laws of emotion, and Mr Davies does not attempt to show that there are any, we need not follow out the conception more fully.

No, what is interesting about the chapter is the fact that, incidentally, it serves to emphasize the complete bankruptcy of his intellectual system. He starts out with the assurance (p. 189) that "we have not discussed God, good, beauty, happiness, morality, the meaning of life or its purpose. The reason for this is that none of them have any existence—in the world of reality". And for him there is only one other world, which he calls "the world of make-believe". He starts by identifying real existence with physical existence; it is therefore necessary for him to hold that non-

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physical realities, such as beauty or happiness, are merely figments of the mind, and he proceeds to the conclusion that the mind can deal with its own figments as it will. There is a figment of the mind called duty, about which he is absolutely silent. But he attaches enormous importance to another figment of the mind, called happiness, and makes this the determining aim in all moral action. We ask why, and it is difficult to see what possible rejoinder he could invent. If happiness is merely a figment of the mind, and by all accounts difficult to come by, why not make up our minds to dispense with happiness altogether? He is vaguely conscious of the *impasse*. "Happiness certainly exists, and, of course, if we define it as a physiological feeling of comfort we may even say that it exists in the world of reality". Yes, but nobody is such a fool as to define it like that. Happiness does not exist in the world of reality, yet it exists. Does it exist *in a world which our imagination can control at will?* If so, why not get rid of the encumbrance? If not, how are we to be certain that the sense of duty, or the sense of right and wrong, do not belong to this same world, not "real" in Mr Davies's sense, which has nevertheless a compelling power over our minds? In a world of *values*; with which useful word Mr Davies, unlike most of the moderns, seems almost unfamiliar.

If his chapter on "What May I Do?" becomes perfectly nugatory in the light of these considerations, the same must be said *à plus fort raison* of his subsequent chapter on "What May I Believe?" His subsequent chapter—it is charac-

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teristic of his, and perhaps of the modern mentality, that instead of deducing libertinism from atheism he should assert libertinism and bring in atheism as an afterthought. His disproof of the existence of God labours, even more signally than Professor Huxley's, from an ignorance of the proofs. Not only is he unaware, like Professor Huxley, that there is a five-fold proof of the existence of God traditional in the Christian Church ; nobody has even told him about Hegel, so that he is not even at pains to establish the Relativity of the Absolute. He concentrates on the three feeble arguments that are known to him ; that from experience, that from design (in the manner of Paley), and that from the inerrancy of Scripture ! And in dealing with the last of these he shows, more than ever, his incapacity for logical argument. He merely pleads that he cannot believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, because science has shown it to be full of mistakes. To which the Fundamentalist would reply, with equal justice, " precisely my own reason for doubting the truth of science " ; an argument which, in these days of relativity, can be used formidably. It does not seem to occur to Mr Davies that the argument from Scripture suffers under a fatal *petitio principii*, deducing the existence of God from the fact that Scripture has God for its author !

The word " God " has, however, a place in his vocabulary. " God is a name we give to something in the world of make-believe " (p. 203). And again (p. 246) : " If a man wishes to call the energy which produces this universe

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God, he is at complete liberty to do so ". At liberty, yes, but *is it true?* And, if it is true, how are we to reconcile ourselves to the belief that God is a name we give to something in the world of make-believe? Is the energy which produces this universe something in the world of make-believe? All Mr Davies's semi-pious maunderings about religion neglect this cardinal fact, that people who believe in a God at all believe in him as something not less real, but more real, than the "reality" which can be measured and expressed in mathematical formulas ; believe in him not as the energy which merely produced, but as the energy which from moment to moment vivifies and inspires it, so that there is no whisper of a motion in nature which is not, ultimately, his Voice. All that Mr Davies does not understand. He gives (p. 227) a completely Deist picture of the Divine Nature, "the idea of a God who made, wound up, and kept the universe repaired, like a watch-maker and his watch", naïvely supposing that this is Christian theology! It is a pity he did not find out what Christian theology is before pronouncing its doom.

But I must not branch off into ulterior questions ; let me pin him down to the main thesis of his book. "The childish beliefs in a personal God, in absolute good and truth and beauty, in universal purpose and benevolent design—all of them seemed perfectly rational so long as the Aristotelian scientific description of the universe seemed rational. Today they are suspended in mid-air without a support, since all that supported them has been shot from

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under them" (p. 261). Now I will take leave to except from that list the words "and benevolent design"; the argument from design was not a medieval but an eighteenth-century notion; and if it has been shot away it has been shot away, not by Einstein or by Jeans or by Freud, but by Darwin. Leave that out of account, and I submit that the whole of Mr Davies's sentence is absolutely meaningless. There are proofs of the existence of God, and they are as valid now as they ever were in the days of St Thomas Aquinas. There are motives which can be urged for doubting the existence of God, and they were as valid in the days of St Thomas Aquinas as they are in our own. Neither proofs nor doubts ever depended for an instant on any particular interpretation of the physical universe. And if Mr Davies knows any considerations to the contrary, it is a pity he did not incorporate them in his book.

His are the old objections of the village cobbler, in a slightly revised form. The village cobbler would believe in nothing save what he could touch or see. Mr Davies believes in nothing he cannot measure and express in a formula; and he reproves the village cobbler for the notion that he can really "touch" or "see" things at all. Let them fight it out between them. But Mr Davies, talking about electrons and amœbas and libidos is only a reincarnation of the village cobbler talking about molecules and jelly-fish and human passions. It is only a syncopated version of an old Victorian tune. And if we live long we shall live to see fresh variations on it, not more plausible.

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I HAVE already recorded the impression that the omniscientists, consciously or unconsciously, aim at substituting a new culture for the culture which Europe has owned, with whatever hesitations, during the past nineteen hundred years ; and that this new culture is to dispense altogether with religion, or at any rate with religion as Europe has understood the meaning of the word during that time. I have two books lying before me which aim at giving some picture of what that culture will be like, Mr Wells's *What Are We To Do With Our Lives?* and Professor Huxley's *What Dare I Think?* It is dangerous to christen a new movement, since humanity is fond of labels, and finds it easier to rally round any system of thought which has been crystallized by a phrase, though it be an unfriendly one. But I do not entertain sufficient confidence that this idea of religion without God will catch on, to be afraid of bestowing a title on it. I am calling it, for purposes of convenience, Whelxleyanism.

You may say that the two books are complementary, representing the active and the contemplative sides of the movement. Mr Wells invokes religion from frankly

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utilitarian motives ; he does not feel confident that his " Open Conspiracy " for putting the world to rights will thrive unless there is a spice of cult about it. Lenin condemned religion as the opium of the people ; Mr Wells is prepared to tolerate it, under proper safeguards, as a kind of cocktail for the reformer. If his world-ideal should ever come off, his new church would, I conceive, go into liquidation ; there would really be no further use for it. But Professor Huxley values religion (as he conceives it) for its own sake. It is an individual experience without which the individual life is stunted and incomplete. We have seen already how he treated the matter in *Religion without Revelation* ; on that side, *What Dare I Think?* adds nothing whatever to his conclusions. His public is ceasing to wonder what he dares to think, and is only curious to know what he will care to publish.

His book is a collection of essays, the substance of lectures which he delivered on various occasions, but it has a kind of unity ; it leads on from his much more interesting discussions about science to his discussions about religion. And the bridge between the two is to be found in his third chapter, which bears the title " Man and his Heredity ". He has told us what man has done, and may yet do, in the way of controlling his natural environment. He has given us a glimpse of the frightful powers which it may one day be possible for us to exercise, if we are willing to exercise them, in shaping the destiny of the human species, including the nightmare possibilities which are exploited by his

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brother in that entertaining tract, *Brave New World*. Then, with a sudden swoop into the concrete and practicable, he proceeds to pave the way for the introduction of Scientific Humanism by loudly demanding the regulation of births. And it is interesting to observe that the central point in Professor Huxley's ruminations is also the central plank in Mr Wells's programme. Side by side with the establishment of universal peace and the rejection of nationalism he emphasizes "the supreme importance of population-control in human biology and the possibility it affords us of a release from the pressure of the struggle for existence" (p. 108).

Neither author is a professed eugenicist. When I wrote a very slight article on Mr Wells's book in one of the papers he was kind enough to correct me in print; I had accused him of picturing a world in which each of us had to ask Mr Wells how many children he ought to have, and this was not his meaning. To that point I shall return; meanwhile, he definitely repudiates the idea of "the human stud-farm". And, although I suspect Professor Huxley of viewing the possibility of ectogenesis with more favour than his brother, although (were the possibility realized) I would not trust him within ten miles of the hatcheries, it must be recognized that at present he pleads for no more than remedial measures; for an attempt to stop the alleged decline in our racial breeding, not for the production of a new type of man.

I do not fancy that Mr Heard or Mr Langdon-Davies

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would have been so moderate ; I can picture either of them, if the mood took him, pleading that the reign of science has not been sufficiently ushered in until we can actually make man in our own image—predestine his tastes, his mentality, his whole attitude towards life. But there is an obvious answer to this extreme form of eugenism ; namely, that if we are going to eliminate from human experience all the phenomena of gestation and birth it is highly doubtful whether we have any right to bring children into the world at all. We cannot be sure that they will be happy ; and we can ensure that they will not be unhappy (which is all the moderns seem to care about) by preventing their ever coming to life. I do not see why the rats or the termite ants should not have their fling at world-domination, if man is what Messrs Heard and Davies believe him to be ; and I cannot easily convince myself that a human race mass-produced on the Heard-Davies pattern would have any absolute value. (Even if one could get Mr Davies to admit that there are any absolute values.) But I have to deal here with the more modest claims of Mr Wells and Professor Huxley ; and surprisingly modest they are.

Mr Wells's whole book has one dominating feature, and, as many of us would think, one fatal weakness—that he refuses to provide any coercive machinery for the realization of his plans, trusting rather to the influence of educated propaganda to achieve it painlessly. And in accordance with this principle he does not want to tell people how many children they may have ; he merely wants to put the

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literature of the birth-prevention movement in front of them and let them decide for themselves, in the light of it, how many children they want to have. This is what he means, apparently, by "population-control". I cannot pretend that, if I were one of Mr Wells's fellow-conspirators, I should feel very happy about this suggestion. After all, he himself would admit that his new Rome cannot be built in a day. And, so long as his sympathizers remain in a small minority, it is surely important to them that they should share (at least) in the natural world-increase of population. But it is a matter of common experience that where the literature of contraception spreads, the result is not a birth-rate calculated on any economic system, but a birth-rate violently and suddenly reduced. And, as far as I can see, the Open Conspiracy will suffer from a law of diminishing returns; in proportion as it makes converts, its converts will fail to reproduce themselves, and will leave the world to those classes which are sufficiently "uneducated" to disagree with him, to those races which are sufficiently "barbarous" to be uninfluenced by his writings. Those schools which he is so anxious to found; by way of counteracting the evil effects of our current education, will suffer, I am afraid, from a severe lack of minors and minimuses.

To these considerations Professor Huxley is fully alive. It is not, alas, the "successful" types that reproduce themselves. He recalls the interesting speculation of Galton, that the habit of marrying rich heiresses may prove

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fatal to an aristocracy ; the heiress would not have been an heiress if her family had been more philoprogenitive ; hence those tears, and the empty cradle. No member of the League of National Life could be more alarmist than Professor Huxley is about our immediate prospects. He sees clearly that the birth-rate is due to fall below par before long, and with uneconomic suddenness ; that in the meanwhile it is not the men who have made good in business, nor yet the students and the men of genius, who have the large families. (I suppose he must be right, being a biologist, about the importance of this latter phenomenon.) It is customary still to assume that the causes of this process are economic ; that the poor either do not know about the possibilities of contraception (I wonder!), or do not mind having large families because the State will shoulder the burden of their education. It is not improbable that this calculation, if insisted on, will put us badly out in our reckoning. But Professor Huxley accepts it, as Dean Inge does ; and Professor Huxley is a biologist.

What, then, is his remedy? He will not resort to Dean Inge's bright proposal that we should penalize the large families of the poor. He will grant bonuses, on the contrary, to increase the small families of the rich. I do not know that I am so greatly concerned as he is to perpetuate the "successful" type ; nor do I feel that we are justified by experience in supposing that the millionaire's son is always a desirable type to produce. But I am heartily with him if he will vote bonuses to the people who at present

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find it most difficult to bring up families—the struggling professional man, the elementary schoolmaster, and so on. Only, is he talking practical politics? To be sure, they order these things better in France ; but does he really think that in the England of our day, with the enormous pull the manual workers have in politics, the enormous commitments we have to meet in other directions, any effective steps can be taken to ease the burden of the middle-classes? In the 1931 Budget the allowance for children was actually reduced. And the thing wants doing now if it is to be done at all ; that is the trouble.

So far as the natural increase of population goes, I do not see that there is much chance for Whelxleyanism. It seems doomed to dispeople itself, leaving the world to those who by tradition of race or creed or class are least likely to be susceptible to its appeal ; to the hordes of the East, and to those more westerly peoples, which have the strongest instincts of nationalism, the Irish, the Poles, the Jews. And most of these are people who, to the scandal of Professor Huxley, will betake themselves to prayer when a volcano is in eruption, instead of waiting about until science discovers a method of keeping volcanoes quiet. . . .

It is plain that Whelxleyanism, if it is to thrive, must make converts, and go on making them. That Mr Wells will muster recruits for his Open Conspiracy as time goes on, I have no doubt ; he has chosen his platform well, as he always does ; he is an adept at being on the side of the big battalions. But it is another question whether the enthu-

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siasm he will arouse can be identified in any intelligible sense with religion. The truth is, both he and Professor Huxley look upon religion as a defined, constant force in human nature which is at present going to waste ; he wants to harness it, Professor Huxley to liberate it. We may think of it as a stream flowing down a mountain-side, romantically beautiful in its encounters with the boulders, the peat-hags, the sudden falls of ground. Professor Huxley thinks it will look splendid when we have graded the levels of the slope, and tidied away all those unbecoming rocks, those muddy scraps of earth ; it shall flow down a nice concrete basin, to refresh the spirits of the passer-by. Mr Wells has an idea worth two of that ; he will use its help to work his own dynamo. But the question is whether religion is such a force, capable of persisting and of satisfying itself in abstraction from its natural surroundings ; whether it is not a response demanding its proper stimulus, which will die out as effectively if Professor Huxley takes trouble about it and disproves the existence of God, as patriotism will (for better or worse) if Mr Wells succeeds in obliterating all boundaries between countries.

Mr Wells tells us, in italics for fear we should overlook the sentiment, that " the desire for service, for subordination, for permanent effect, for an escape from the distressful pettiness and mortality of the individual life, is the undying element in every religious system " (p. 32). He recognizes, indeed, a variety of human temperaments ; for some people " a God still anthropomorphic enough to have a will and

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purpose, to display preferences and reciprocate emotions, must be retained until the end of time. For others, God can be thought of as a Great First Cause, as impersonal and inhuman as atomic structure" (p. 28). Can he, indeed, Mr Wells? Can anybody outside a lunatic asylum think of a Great First Cause, not supra-personal or super-human, but impersonal and inhuman, which can be the cause of personal and human intelligences? But these things will slip out; let it pass. Mr Wells recognizes two types of mind, but he expresses a decided preference for the latter. And, indeed, the seventh of the broad principles on which his conspiracy is founded is "the admission . . . that our immortality is conditional and lies in the race and not in our individual selves" (p. 113). It is possible, he says, that this may be "if not too restrictive, at least unnecessary". Adherents of an older theology will be admitted, we may suppose, to a kind of honorary membership. But the religious *élan* of the conspiracy will clearly be supplied by a more broad-bottomed confession of faith.

Now, it would be absurd to deny that any idealistic movement, while its desires are strong and unsatisfied, can be crowned with an aura of quasi-religious inspiration; particularly when (like Bolshevism) it is influenced by the half-conscious desire to beat the religious people at their own game. And it not only imitates the gestures of a Church, but of a Church at one of its vital periods of dynamic activity. There is no room for that "everydayism" of which Mr Wells rightly complains as a too common

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feature in our ordinary lives ; revivalism is in the air. I am only haunted by the doubt whether the Open Conspiracy is not a little too well aligned with the common thought of our day to be a proper breeding-ground for fanaticisms. To provide a substitute for religion a political movement must, I take it, provide a substitute for faith ; it must insist one-sidedly, and in defiance of human calculations, on some one loyalty which the rest of the world thinks fantastic. Feminism yesterday, Bolshevism today, provide instances of that fanatical quality which I cannot associate, somehow, with the carefully argued, carefully selected slogans of Mr Wells. In the trough after the Great War, we are all anti-militarists ; in the embarrassments of the great glut, we are all out to centralize world-control somehow. And for the rest, the programme of the Open Conspiracy looks suspiciously like Fabianism trading under an *alias*. It is capable, no doubt, of making considerable demands on our energy and our imaginations ; but does it make sufficient demands on our faith? Is it not all a little too tangible to be exciting?

But let us assume that, for the time being, the three large volumes recently published by Mr Wells on History, Science, and the Wealth of Mankind are destined to supersede the Bible, and will lash his disciples into a kind of Fundamentalist fury in propagating his ideas. Is it so certain that, when the millennium is achieved, the Fundamentalist fury will survive? All very well now for Mr Wells to stand at the street corners, beating up Europe into

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a new Crusade with the cry of *La Première Cause le veut*. Will those flowers of martyrdom outlive the withering touch of success? A supernatural religion has this advantage at least, that the object it sets before you is inexhaustible. But a political movement loses its life when it has achieved even a partial success; remember Feminism as it was before the war, and see what it has shrunk to. Doubtless, if you set yourself to abolish existing religions, as they do in Russia, you will provide a temporary compensation for their loss in the excitement of your anti-religious campaign. But if the Bolshevik experiment achieved a world-wide success, the gap would be felt once more where religion used to be. And Mr Wells's conspiracy, which would succeed tomorrow if he could enlist a sufficient number of bankers in his support, would go the same way without difficulty.

No, if there is a permanent value in the religious attitude, and it is worth conserving, we must preserve it not as part of a scheme of *ad interim* reconstruction, but as an integral part of our common experience. And here, perhaps, Professor Huxley will claim to have succeeded where Mr Wells has failed. Mr Wells, in the market-place, arouses transient evangelistic fervours around the salmon-pink banner of his choice. Professor Huxley, aloof from the dust of these mundane conflicts, sits in his expurgated oratory, contemplating, with occasional uprushes from his subconscious, a long row of statues—laws of nature on this side, human values on that. Unseeing, unhearing, they

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return his gaze, ὁμμάτων δ' ἐν ἀχηνίαις ἔρρει πᾶσ' Ἀφροδίτῃ: an inverted Pygmalion, he thanks science that they can never come to life. Who will join him at his orisons? I suspect nobody.

Not that he means to neglect any opportunity for propaganda. "The only way to dissipate this attitude of mind"—namely, the attitude of mind which believes in witchcraft!—"is by education. Every child must be taught something about science. . . . Much of the spirit of science is best brought home to the child's mind by some account of scientific history. The story of Galileo confounding authority by his famous but simple weight-dropping experiment . . . how the early anatomists persisted in satisfying their thirst for knowledge, in spite of ecclesiastical prohibitions on dissection . . . the Middle Ages' ignorance of the very idea of etc., etc., etc. . . . If religious bodies should set themselves to oppose such a treatment of science in schools, they will be mistaking their rightful sphere, and their opposition must at all costs be overcome" (pp. 132-134). Perfect, is it not?

When Bishop Chisholm of Aberdeen was taking pot-luck with a Scots minister, he was surprised to hear his host tell a servant to "bring out the Pope". This was followed by the appearance of an enormous cheese, and it was explained to the Bishop that this name was invented for it because it came in so handy when there was nothing else to eat, just like the Pope when you could not think of anything else to talk about in a sermon. . . . The habit,

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fortunately moribund in this island, of continually harping on the negative side of a religious creed, is one which Professor Huxley is evidently determined to emulate. It may be hard to train the young idea in an attitude of religious veneration for science, but at least we will do our best by training them in a religious detestation of its critics. Galileo, the anatomists,¹ the ignorant Middle Ages—all that our children shall learn about, at the expense of the tax-payer; we might construct a regular martyrology out of Giordano Bruno and the rest of them; and, having thus contrived to annoy the religious bodies, we shall be very angry with them if they object, and tell them that they are mistaking their proper sphere. Their proper sphere—yes, I like that.

Still, as I have suggested, it is easier to create religious prejudice against Galileo's judges than to produce hero-worship of Galileo. And somehow I do not see the children in our elementary schools learning to connect wireless-sets and Bunsen burners with an atmosphere of what Professor Huxley calls "sacredness", even by such methods as these. It is all very well to tell us that "by forcing religious thought to distinguish between theological scaffolding and religious core, science has actually encouraged the growth of a truer and more purely religious spirit" (p. 122); but when we have sufficiently admired Professor Huxley's manipulation of metaphors, is there even a core of truth behind the scaffolding of his sentence?

¹ See above, p. 181.

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I mean, as a matter of plain fact, do people who have reached his own philosophical conclusions show any gust for his Barmecidal dishing-up of theology; outside a few coteries of the professionally earnest? It would be interesting to ask a taxi-driver to take one to the nearest ethical church.

No, the trouble about Mr Wells's religion is that it might be got going, but it is hard to see how it is to be kept going; I cannot foresee the smallest probability that Professor Huxley's religion will ever be got going at all. "Even if we no longer symbolize the forces that mould man's destiny in the form of an independent God, we must acknowledge that to reflect on them, to attempt to think of them in their totality, and this in a spirit of reverence, is still a need and still a duty" (p. 247)—why on earth should we acknowledge any such thing? I can understand Mr Wells wanting to abolish war and poverty, and if he should propose to attain that object by revivalist methods I do not see why we should quarrel with him. But Professor Huxley's notion that we should indulge in a sort of secularized Quaker meeting, where we shall sit round brooding on infra-red rays and the pituitary gland, seems to serve no useful purpose whatever. And the public, I gravely fear, will accuse him of having taken away its God without even saving it the bother of going to church.

I suppose it is we Christians who are at fault, in part at least, if modern unbelief thus misconstrues our aspirations. Mr Wells sees us as a crowd of energetic people running round and organizing things; holding bazaars, raising

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subscriptions, agitating about grievances, attending mass meetings, writing to the newspapers, enjoying ourselves in a perpetual whirl of non-selfish activity. And to him it seems as if all this energy were running to waste over a vain hope of immortality ; what a pity that it cannot be switched off and made to subserve the interests of an enlightened, though secular, propaganda ! Professor Huxley sees us as individual souls, bowed down by the contemplation of our private griefs, slinking into Westminster Cathedral at the rush hour to shake off the world's dust a little, and coming out feeling vaguely comforted by the silence and mystery of our surroundings. And it seems to him that it is only a matter of mental habit, this idea of addressing our unspoken wishes and unbosoming our griefs to a Person ; a slight alteration of perspective would enable us to derive the same satisfaction without doing violence to our intellectual consciences. It is, I suppose, because we are apt to mistake the means for the end, or talk and behave as if we mistook the means for the end, that we are so easily misunderstood. There *is* a fascination, to some minds at any rate, about the merely external activities of the Christian life ; a half-worldly loyalty to the institutions of our faith merely *as institutions*, a fussiness and love of interference which gains, without earning, the title of zeal ; a combativeness (often) which, though devoted sincerely enough to the end it hopes to further, is too self-consciously combative. And on the other side there is a kind of imperfection which disposes us to look upon our religion as merely a channel

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through which we *get* something, and to value it only in proportion as it seems to quiet an ache and to answer a need. I have the feeling that if either of the two authors whom I have been discussing were brought into the presence of an actual saint, could sample the atmosphere of a man or woman really eaten up with the idea of God, they would understand better what it is they are trying to take away from us others, when they talk so glibly of religion dissociated from theology. They might be confirmed in the idea that we are the pathetic survivors of an outworn superstition ; but they would realize that what they propose to us involves more than a mere change of loyalties. Neither of them really expects to make the irreligious part of mankind more religious ; they want to re-orientate the outlook of Christians, under the impression that a good Christian will make a good atheist. I hope they will be undeceived by failure ; they will be undeceived, if not, by their success.

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THE position of the human race, since it told off its spies to investigate for it the Promised Land of physical reality, is not unlike that of the Israelites in the wilderness. It seems but yesterday that the first batch returned to us with the assurance that the universe was composed of hard, knobby little particles; solid matter, there was no getting away from it; nor could anything exist, except those particles, in such a sense at least that we ought to attach any importance to it. Now the second report is to hand, and we are to believe that nothing is knowable except mathematical relations between electric charges; the walls of Jericho are no longer solid, the stream of Jordan no longer impracticable—it is only by an abstraction in our own minds that we see them as two things, not as one. The theologians may be pardoned if they find it difficult to adjust their thought, as everybody seems to demand that they should adjust their thought, to each bewildering development in turn.

But it is not only the theologians who are puzzled. The agnostic philosophers, the humanitarian reformers, who enjoyed so much public confidence in the top-hatted days

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of our youth, found great comfort in the immovable certitudes which natural science offered them. Moral determinism was conveniently to be deduced from the fixity of physical laws; and the watchword of evolution accustomed the public mind to the idea that everything was bound to go on as it was, only rather more so, of course, growing better all the time. The fantastic triumphs of the human genius in a century or two of sudden advance were proof that we were well on the way to the apotheosis of man, as the crown of all possible achievement. Now we hear more about anarchy among the electrons; a longer view of destiny, based on the second law of thermodynamics, replaces the picture of continual upward advance by one of continual dissipation of energy; and the Behaviourists are getting ready to analyse away even the most cherished illusions of mankind, including perhaps the scientific method itself. Meanwhile, the ready co-operation of the chemist in plotting the decimation of Europe by war has cast doubts on the uplifting mission of the new knowledge; we are not quite sure whether we want to be governed by experts after all. And—if I may shift my metaphor by a point or two—a man like Lord Russell, called in by his publishers to bless the New Jerusalem which modern tendencies foreshadow, finds himself in a position which is the reverse of Balaam's. "How ugly are thy tabernacles!"—he feels inclined to curse where he should have blessed.

I do not know whether Mr Aldous Huxley had had the opportunity to consult his book, *The Scientific Outlook*,

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before he gave us his own criticisms on Utopia in *Brave New World*. If the resemblances are only accidental—and from what I know of the time books take to publish, I should suppose that they must have been—they are in the highest degree significant; they show how two really alert minds, that of a philosopher and that of a novelist, can be driven to the same conclusion about the direction in which our age is heading, and the dangers of it. In either account you have a slave-world, in which class-distinctions persist, but all the more severely marked because they depend on artificial differences in the breeding and education of the human animal; in either you have the speculation that some safe drug will make it possible for the jaded inhabitant of a Mappin-terrace world to forget his boredom in spells of pleasant intoxication; in either you have aeroplane trips substituted for the possibility of adventure; in either you have sexual satisfaction divorced equally from parenthood and from romance. So little variety is there even in the distant prospect of the ideal state.

What is going to happen, then, if Mr Wells's Open Conspiracy succeeds, with its abolition of nationality, war, and poverty, and if—it is a horrible thought, but we have to face it—if Mr Wells should lose control of it? Must humanity really be reduced to a stud-farm, managed co-operatively by the general will? Or is there some hope—Lord Russell himself, in more optimistic moments, confesses to some hope—that the picture of what man might possibly find himself able to do, later on, is not what

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he actually will do? After all, government is not yet in the hands of the scientists. Mr Heard appears to see an antithesis between politics and science, roundly accusing the Bolsheviks of prostituting science to their own ends with an obscurantism hardly short of medieval. But science, he thinks, will inevitably be too much for the Bolsheviks. Mr Wells clearly assumes that the scientists will align themselves in the ranks of his conspiracy without hesitation. Lord Russell is frankly cynical about scientists as a class. "The modern man of science knows that he is respected, and feels that he does not deserve respect. He approaches the established order apologetically. . . . In return, the established order showers knighthoods and fortunes upon the men of science, who become more and more determined supporters of the injustice and obscurantism on which our social system is based" (p. 103). If the scientist's services can thus be retained by the bestowal of titles—Lord Russell evidently thinks that these should come like manna if they come at all—he will lend himself without difficulty to any plan for the reconstruction of the world, always, be it understood, conducted from above by the powers that be. "The war and the Russian Revolution have made all timid men conservative, and professors are usually temperamentally timid" (p. 105). In Utopia, they will reap their reward, and as a result pure science will languish. "The men at the head of any department of research will be elderly, and content to think that the fundamentals of their subject are sufficiently known.

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Discoveries which upset the fundamental view of officials, if they are made by young men, will incur disfavour, and if rashly published will lead to degradation. . . . The atmosphere of authority and organization will be extremely favourable to technical research, but somewhat inimical to such subversive innovations as we have seen, for example, in physics during the present century " (p. 256). In a word, it is not a reign of scientists that Lord Russell anticipates and fears; it is rather a reign of men with organizing ability, who will bend the scientists to their own purposes.

Lord Russell admits in his concluding sentence that "hope for the future is at least as rational as fear", and I cannot help feeling that many of his readers will go away with an impression he did not mean to create—namely, that all this sort of thing is *inevitable*. It is not inevitable. Even if science implements all the high-flown promises which the omniscientists make on her behalf, producing synthetic food, and offering to produce a synthetic population to eat it—even if that big "If" is realized, it does not follow that we shall use all the means put at our disposal, even though they are tidy, even though they are economical. Science has a knack of inventing substitutes which are not quite the same thing. We all got accustomed to margarine in the war, but we went back to butter at the first moment possible. People still come and listen to lectures, although they can get better lectures on the wireless. There is a streak in us that dislikes State-managed concerns; it has long been possible for any

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mother to have her child brought up at the public expense, by depositing it on the doorstep of the nearest foundling home, but it only happens in unfortunate cases ; and people still starve in a slum rather than live in a workhouse. But there is the possibility of State compulsion, I shall be reminded. That is true, but recent experiments in Prohibition do not suggest that it is easy for a public authority to alter violently the habits of a nation. And, of course, there is the Church. . . . It is an odd fact that a believer can always imagine the future more easily than an unbeliever. For the latter must be at pains to assume the disappearance of religion ; the former is not bigoted enough to assume the disappearance of irreligion.

No, the reason why these nightmare prophecies have value, these awful warnings proposed to us by Lord Russell and Mr Huxley today, or by Mr Chesterton any time this quarter of a century back, is that they throw into relief those elements in life whose disappearance we should regret, and force us to consider why we should regret it. Plato's ideal republic was not meant as a realizable political programme ; Socrates elaborates it in order that he may see, writ large, the various elements which conflict, and which ought to live peaceably, in the soul of a man. In the same way, we may learn from these modern nightmares what elements there are in our nature which science, not through its fault but through the limitations of its terms of reference, cannot penetrate with its glass so as to exhaust their content. And I do not apologize for having approached Lord Russell's

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stimulating book in topsy-turvy order, starting at the end, which is practical, and so working back to the beginning, which is theoretical, because I feel that his later chapters qualify, perhaps more than he realized, the impression left on the reader by those which went before them. Anybody who put down the book after the first ten chapters would be liable to go away with the idea that its author was completely dazzled by the recent successes of the scientific method, and only quarrelled with its spokesmen where, *sutores super crepidam*, they start talking theology.

"When I come to die", he writes (p. 275), "I shall not have lived in vain. I have seen the earth turn red at evening, the dew sparkling in the morning, and the snow shining under a frosty night; I have smelt rain after drought and have heard the stormy Atlantic beat upon the granite shores of Cornwall. Science may bestow these and other joys upon more people than could otherwise enjoy them; If so, its power will be wisely used. But when it takes out of life the moments to which life owes its value, science will not deserve admiration". Quite true. But what exactly does he mean when he talks of science "taking out of life the moments which give life its value"? Does he really mean science, or does he mean the scientists?

I imagine the scientists. He is full of an idea, which I suppose he has picked up from some of his psychological friends, that the modern incentive to scientific discovery is a "power-impulse". Thus (p. 272): "Step by step, as science has developed . . . the impulse of power, which

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was at first a mere camp-follower, has gradually usurped command in virtue of its unforeseen success ” ; and (p. 274), “ The leaders of the modern world are drunk with power : the fact that they can do something that no one previously thought it possible to do is to them a sufficient reason for doing it ”—but indeed the whole book is full of such warnings. To do the scientists justice, I think this account of their motives is rather fanciful. I do not see that their corporation as a whole has any other ambition than common human curiosity ; I hope even the psychologists allow the existence of curiosity? If not, let them study the cow or the weasel ; let them call it an Actæon-complex, or what they will, but the impulse is there. And the attitude of science as a whole towards the universe is the attitude of Budge in *Helen's Babies* towards the watch, “ Want to shee wheelsh go wound ! ” The individual scientist, on the other hand, is spurred on to research by the reflection that that is what he is there for ; he must do something to justify his existence and his salary. No, the people who have this “ power-impulse ”, if that is the right name to give it, are the people whom I have described as “ omniscientists ” ; specialists, some of them, in their several departments, but constantly writing about subjects which lie outside those departments ; journalists, some of them, who get all their science from the handbooks. But it is not these men, as yet, who control the world ; and it is incumbent on those who believe in common human things to resist their influence and to combine against it. Lord

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Russell himself would be a welcome recruit for *my* Open Conspiracy, if he really feels like that about it.

But when he is betrayed into writing "*science* takes out of life the moments which give life its value", I am not sure that he is not condescending to a different kind of weakness, common among minds less philosophical than his own. I mean, the weakness which makes us afraid, when we are lying awake at night, that science itself, the mere advance of man's investigation into the nature of things, will before long make it impossible for us to admire nature, or to love, or to be indignant, or show preferences of taste, or to argue, or to be excited, or in any other way to exercise our human prerogatives. What if all such emotions of ours are pronounced illusions, psychoanalysed away, or explained in degrading terms by carefully reasoned formulas? It is not so much the *Quod erat faciendum* of science we fear, as its *Quod erat demonstrandum*. Shall we open, before long, some dreadful page in the great book of nature which will teach us that *nothing matters*? Here there is no longer any wrestling against flesh and blood possible; it is a conflict of the soul.

Of some such threat to the fundamentals of human thought Lord Russell seems conscious. "Science", he writes (p. 271), "in its beginnings was due to men who were in love with the world. They perceived the beauty of the stars and the sea, of the winds and the mountains. . . . They wished to understand them more intimately than a mere outward contemplation made possible. . . . As

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physics has developed, it has deprived us step by step of what we thought we knew concerning the intimate nature of the physical world. Colour and sound, light and shade, form and texture, belong no longer to that external nature that the Ionians sought as the bride of their devotion. All these things have been transferred from the beloved to the lover, and the beloved has become a mere skeleton of rattling bones, but perhaps a mere phantasm". Surely, here is where we might have looked to the metaphysician to help us? All through the earlier part of his book Lord Russell has been covering the same ground which was covered by Mr Davies, with far more insight, it need hardly be said, and with far more intelligence. He has traced the growth of science historically; he has turned Pavlov into a man, instead of a footnote. Might we not have hoped that he would criticize the results of the process; have said, Here and here science, of its own nature, can go no further; this and this, whatever other certainties we may come to doubt, remain certain?

The omniscientists, it is true, do not deny the existence of other approaches to truth; but they make no attempt to assess their worth, or to fit them into a scheme. Mr Davies, as we have seen, refers everything which cannot be treated by the methods of natural science to the "world of make-believe". But such a division of experience is plainly a shallow one; it implies that the mind is not merely the seat but the arbiter of all the successive fantasies that occupy it. If words are to have any meaning, we must

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understand him to say that our minds judge thus and thus because they choose to, not because they are constrained to ; and this is directly contrary to all our experience. Neither the statement that things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another, nor the statement that the Parthenon is more beautiful than a suburban villa, can be verified in our external experience ; yet one of them is quoted by Mr Davies himself as certain truth, the other cannot be whittled down, by the hardest psychologist, into a wish-fulfilment. Mr Davies has made the old mistake of confusing reality with physical reality, and his definition has played him false. Professor Huxley, on the other hand, is for ever talking about " values ", and telling us about Wordsworth and Beethoven for fear we should mistake him for a materialist. He is not a materialist, but he is a sentimentalist, and he splashes his values all over the place much as you may fix up candles on a Christmas tree ; he has no notion where they belong, nor where his admissions lead him to.

Lord Russell is a philosopher ; we might have expected that he would get us further than this. We might have expected him to tell us whether the new developments in physics are destined to land us in complete scepticism, or the new developments in psychology in complete materialism. Or, in the alternative, if the physicists leave us no matter and the Behaviourists leave us no mind, what curious residuum is to correspond with the concept of existence. But of all this there is no word ; on its theoretical side, *The Scientific*

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Outlook shows apprehension, not lest we should come to believe too little, but lest we should come to believe too much. It has not escaped the notice of the omniscientists that the new physics are liable to have a most painful effect on those who are best qualified to understand them. To fill in the gaps in their own system, these scientists fall back on the mental furniture of an earlier age, using the word "God" and even the word "Creation". Mr Mencken, as we have seen, loses his temper, and speaks of such men as he would speak of a jockey pulling a horse in whose chances he was interested. He does not, however, condescend to examine their arguments. Mr Davies issues a notice, in his most schoolmasterly manner, warning us that he will be very much annoyed if we use the principle of indeterminacy to bolster up the effete doctrine of free will. Lord Russell takes the whole business more seriously; he reasons both with Sir James Jeans and with Sir Arthur Eddington at some length. The spectacle of a philosopher rebuking scientists with over-credulity is so refreshing that I make no apology for pausing over it.

Personally, I find myself almost entirely in agreement with Lord Russell in his strictures upon the new tendencies in apologetic. He himself writes as if "the theologians" had enthusiastically taken over Jeans and Eddington as defenders of the faith. I cannot tell how this may be in other denominations; it is certainly not so in my own. We did not need Mr Davies or Lord Russell to warn us that scientific speculations are here today and gone tomorrow.

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We have supported the freedom of the will through centuries during which it was assumed with confidence that every event in nature took place in accordance with mechanical laws ; we are satisfied with our position in the conflict with determinism, and are not lightly to be lured away from it by the promise of "a better 'ole". As Lord Russell acutely points out, it is philosophically impossible to prove the absence of law ; all you can establish, when you speak of "indeterminacy" in the behaviour of the atoms, is that they do not behave in accordance with any known law. Even if no law is ever discovered, that would not prove that no law exists. Nor did I find myself much encouraged by the speculations of Sir James Jeans—I am not sure that Lord Russell has gone into them very fully—where he seemed inclined to replace the notion of a God controlling the motions of the universe by that of a God predicting the motions of the universe in accordance with a law of averages—a supreme Actuary instead of a supreme Law-giver. It seems to assume that there is such a thing as a "law" of averages over which God himself has no control ; and I cannot see how a God so limited could be the proper Object of worship.

Again, the second law of thermodynamics, which would represent the history of the natural universe as a progressive decline from an original state of equilibrium—a nightmare experience during which the bed-clothes of existence, once so scrupulously "made", have been growing more and more disordered ever since—is not as necessary to the postulates

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of the Christian thinker as to those of the Deist. The Deist thinks of God as having created the world and then left it to run on its own steam, so to speak ; it is good news for him to learn that, according to the best modern opinion, there *was* a zero-hour at which the worlds were set on their course, and all that has followed has followed in accordance with a single principle. Christian thought, which is pledged to the doctrine that all the physical energy in nature is but the expression of God's continual activity, does not find it difficult to accept this modern notion, but, on the other hand, did not need it.

On the whole, I think Lord Russell is justified in saying—I have taken the liberty of inscribing the sentiment on my title-page—that “ Our age has been rendered conceited by the multitude of new discoveries and inventions, but in the realm of philosophy it is much less in advance of the past than it imagines itself to be ” (p. 124). I only ask myself: If Lord Russell is at pains to examine the latest theories of the physicists, because *at first sight* they seem likely to lead to a recrudescence of the Christian superstition, how is it that the other omniscientists continue to assure us so complacently that the latest movements in scientific thought have managed to knock the bottom out of the Christian superstition altogether? May it not be that the anti-religious moral which they derive from their survey of contemporary thought is as illusory as the religious moral drawn by Jeans and Eddington? Surely we may plead that irreligion, like religion, should be made of sterner stuff, not

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depending for its certainties on the annual report of the British Association's proceedings. And here I find myself irresistibly intrigued by the irreligious certainties of Lord Russell himself.

They seem to be summed up in a sentence on his preceding page, "The purely intellectual argument on this point may be put in a nutshell : is the Creator amenable to the laws of physics or is he not? If he is not, he cannot be inferred from physical phenomena, since no physical causal law can lead to him ; if he is, we shall have to apply the second law of thermodynamics to him and suppose that he also had to be created at some remote period. But in that case he has lost his *raison d'être*." Lord Russell is right in saying that we are not really dealing with any very new problems ; his own argument is a repetition of the idea that there cannot be an uncaused Cause, because if so he must have been caused by something else. We should admit, to be sure, that physics considered in themselves cannot lead to the postulation of a supernatural Cause, for they must start from their own first principles and assume energy as a given fact, which does not need explanation. But it still remains to be seen whether you can construct any coherent metaphysic which will relate the fact of physical motion to the experience of Mind without bringing in the idea of a supra-physical Creative Cause. All this, to be sure, is no news to Lord Russell, who has his own metaphysical notions ; what I complain of is that he should have given, perhaps involuntarily, the impression of dismissing not only Sir

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Arthur Eddington, but the whole philosophy of theism, under a formula so far from profound.

Is he really satisfied with his own phrase (p. 132): "The dualism of mind and matter is out of date: matter has become more like mind, and mind has become more like matter, than seemed possible at an earlier stage of science"? He reminded us but now that in the realm of philosophy our age is much less in advance of the past than it imagines itself to be; does he really believe that in the realm of philosophy Jeans is much in advance of Berkeley, or Pavlov of Hume? Does he really believe that, if the present lines of advance in physics and in psychology were continued *ad infinitum*, the outer world could be annihilated to a grey thought in a grey shade, or the philosophical judgments of mankind reduced to a conditioned reflex? Or that, if this were done, the difference between the subject and the object in thought would somehow miraculously disappear? "Out of date", as if man had not dreamt, long since, all that man now claims; "more *like* mind", "more *like* matter", as if the distinction between thought and its object were a difference of degree, a feature here, a characteristic there, to be planed down before the perfect resemblance would emerge! Can we be blamed if we suspect prejudice in a mind which argues so off-handedly?

Indeed, if I were inclined to take a leaf out of the omniscient's book, I should write down all Lord Russell's antipathy to religion as a wish-fulfilment. He is a pessimist, I think, before he is a sceptic; the cast of his mind,

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whether you interpret it in terms of humours or in terms of inhibitions, is strangely jaundiced. When he has considered Professor Lloyd Morgan's argument for "emergent evolution", he does not "pretend to know whether Professor Lloyd Morgan's opinion is true or false. For aught I know to the contrary, there may be a Being of infinite power who chooses that children should die of meningitis, and older people of cancer; these things occur, and occur as the result of evolution" (p. 135). St Thomas, after proving the existence of God, cites the existence of evil in the world as his *primo videtur quod non*; nor does he attempt to answer the problem, which will never be answered, fully at least, in this world. But Lord Russell has been cramming up his argument against the Goodness of God before he will consider any proofs of his existence; he will not look for God in the things that are made, because he is terrified of finding him.

And yet, when it comes to the good things of life, when science threatens, somehow, to take away from him the moments that make life worth living, the scepticism falls off like a mask. These at least are certain; these at least cannot be psychoanalysed or thermodynamicized away. If only Lord Russell would consent to work out his philosophy of Good, is it not conceivable that it might balance out with his philosophy of Evil, and so leave him free to discuss, without prepossession, the major problems of theodicy? At present, he sees the boundaries of our knowledge extended, without being made more lucid, by scien-

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tists whom he dislikes and distrusts ; he foresees in a dreary vista of the future the gradual mechanization of life, under the influence of those very reforming tendencies with which in the past he has conspicuously identified himself. It is a grim Bible that has its Genesis torn out, and so discouraging an Apocalypse.

AN EDUCATIONAL TALK

I MEAN to set down here, in expostulation with the omni-scientists, my reasons for saying that there is no conflict between religion and science ; I mean, that the discoveries which have been made recently by the observations and experiments of man, in his curiosity about the nature of the world around him, have not affected our grounds for believing in the existence of a personal Creator, or in the historical revelation which, we claim, he has made of himself. Naturally, I do not propose to bring home, in the course of a single chapter, the truth either of the theistic position or of the Christian revelation. All I am concerned to show is that, as far as I can see, the position is what it was ; there were the same difficulties about belief a hundred years ago as there are today, and the same justifications for belief today as there were a hundred years ago, so far at least as the deliveries of natural science are concerned. I am attempting to make a reply, not only to the expressed views of the authors whose writings we have been considering, but to their unexpressed thoughts ; the tacit assumptions which they make, trusting in a vague popular prejudice to countenance them in doing so.

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ANTHROPOLOGY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION

It is not true that the defence of theism necessarily involves the existence of a belief in God amongst the most primitive societies. The notion that our belief in God is simply something we have received from our remote ancestors, and that its credit depends upon that fact, was stigmatized under the name of Traditionalism by the Vatican Council. The Council asserted, in accordance with all Christian precedent, that God can be known by man through his works in the natural order, through his Creation. If, therefore, the study of comparative religions should compel us to admit that in the most primitive societies whose ideas we can study theology does not exist, that would be no disproof of Theism. As Christians, indeed, we maintain that man believed in God at the earliest period of his existence; but it would not be impossible for whole peoples to have lost that knowledge and degenerated into superstition. As a matter of fact, the researches of anthropologists seem to be tending rather in the opposite direction, and the existence not merely of a theology but of monotheism among the most primitive peoples we know of is more and more coming to be admitted.

It is not true that the study of comparative religions has disproved the doctrines, or discredited the divine origin, of Christianity. When people say that the story of our Lord's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection is "the same as" that of Osiris or that of Thammuz, they are obviously

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missing the mark. For what the resemblances are worth, they may be interesting ; but the fact remains, too easily forgotten, that you are comparing something legendary with something which is, or claims to be, historical. Stories about a legendary king called Arthur, the deliverer of his people, do not cast doubt on the records, ostensibly historical, which have come down to us about a king called Alfred. You cannot brush the two aside together as fables ; you must examine the alleged history by the canons of history. That heathen mythology should have made one or two guesses which foreshadowed the truth of revelation caused no surprise to the Fathers of the Church—who are chiefly responsible for preserving to us the legends in question—and need cause no surprise to us. There is no reason why the *Præparatio Evangelica* should not have taken place amongst the Gentiles, as amongst the Jews. And when it is claimed that the use of similar observances—*e.g.*, incense or rosary beads—among Christian and non-Christian worshippers is evidence that all religions are much of a muchness, we can only admire the singular mentality which finds matter for astonishment. A bank which is solvent and a bank which has no assets will issue cheques, not observably different in their *format* ; why does it not occur to the moderns that there are only a limited number of ways in which the religious instinct could possibly be expressed, and in which the practice of religion could be made easy for the forgetful and the illiterate? And why must it always be the resemblances between cults, never the

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differences, to which their principles allow them to draw attention?

ARCHÆOLOGY

It is not true that "the triumphs of the spade" have revised all our notions about the documents handed down to us from antiquity. On the whole, it can be said that whereas the evidence of the monuments often confirms tradition, there has been no noticeable instance in which it has confirmed the more daring theories of scholarship. It was not to be expected that, with all the recent enthusiasm for excavation, much would have come to light which would directly corroborate, for example, the Scripture narrative. If we expected that, we were hunting for a needle in a haystack. But, while this new knowledge has not served either to confirm or to correct our earlier information, it has made it easy for the moderns to write a great deal about antiquity, with some help from the imagination, without using the Bible as a source of evidence in the manner of our fathers. In a word, while archæology has not discredited the Bible, it has made it possible to ignore it; and this produces a quite unreal effect on the public. The fact that it is possible to write a history of the world down to our Lord's time which does not mention Moses or David insinuates, by mere suggestion, the idea that the Old Testament does not matter; that it is as unimportant for religious as for secular history. This gap, deliberately left in our human reminiscences, has probably been influential

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in secularizing the notions of the half-educated, but it is a question of emphasis merely ; it does not correspond to any real advance made by anti-Christian propaganda.

ASTRONOMY

It is not true that the discovery—hardly modern—of our earth's insignificance, compared with the vast universe which surrounds it, has revolutionized our conception of man's importance in the scale of being. Lord Russell in particular seems to feel this objection ; he says the idea of a God creating so vast a universe, the whole importance of which was concentrated in a single planet like ours, reminds him of one of those interminable after-dinner stories which lead up with enormous circumstance to a rather uninteresting point. I suppose it is a matter of mystical temperament ; perhaps Lord Russell, like Dr Jenkinson in the *New Republic*, has a sensible horror of the stars. But I hope I am not alone in feeling that the position of man amid all this pothor of worlds is somehow appropriate. On the one side, if Lord Russell will excuse my being so mythological, the size of the universe gives him a kind of faint gauge by which he can measure the Greatness of the God who made it. And, on the other side, there is a certain feeling of good-comradeship towards one's fellow-worldlings induced by the fact of being cooped up together in this snug little apartment—rather like the cheerfulness of an inn on a rainy night. But that, to be sure, is all temperament ; as a matter of pure reason I cannot see why we should set any limits

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to what would be considered a suitable quantum of creation by a Power *ex hypothesi* unlimited. As Lord Russell himself sees, the real difficulty is not to imagine why God created so much, but to imagine why he created anything at all. But this, at least, is hardly a new problem ; it has exercised the minds of theologians ever since theologians existed.

The same argument sometimes takes another form, and a very curious one. With all these constellations about (it is argued) there was almost bound to be just one, on the law of averages, which would permit the existence of life, and therefore of animal life, of human life. There is no need to invoke Providential design, and to insist that if our climate on this globe were not what it is, we should have been unable to exist. Were ours the only world, this might be reasonable ; but as it is, we are merely the millionth chance ; there is no question of design at all. It is evident that such an argument appeals to the law of averages ; to the law of averages it must go. If it is an accident that our world should be capable of producing life, it is presumably an accident also that it should in fact have produced it, and that that life should have persisted. As far as our experience goes, life springs from life ; the emergence of life from inorganic matter must have been an outside chance, verifiable, on the law of averages, once in how many centuries? And the emergence of animal life from vegetable life is another such chance ; what were the odds against the first amoeba (or whatever it was) having a fatal accident? And,

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once more, the emergence of man from the brute must have been only an outside chance ; the odds were all against our leaving the tree-tops, all against our surviving if we did. The existence, then, of man—but for whom the universe would have been meaningless, a play without a spectator—is not merely an accident but a complication of four separate accidents, not to mention the accident which, presumably, brought the universe into existence in the first place. We may be pardoned for asking whether the coincidence is not rather remarkable. Circumstantial evidence, says Holmes, quoting Thoreau, can be very convincing, as when you find a trout in the milk.

BIOLOGY

It is not true that Christian tradition was, till Darwin came, pledged to the notion of fixed types, as numerous at the beginning of the world as they are today. Anybody who will take the trouble to consult Dr Messenger's recent book on *Evolution and Theology* will find that some of the Fathers of the Church, noticeably St Augustine, anticipated our modern ideas in a remarkable way, though, of course, not from the angle of experimental research. The view that the body of man is developed from a common stock with the apes remains, on the one side, a theory which still lacks decisive confirmation ; remains, on the other side, a theory which the Church has not condemned. It may be pointed out that the infusion of a soul into a creature which was merely animal by ancestry would in itself be no more surprising than the infusion of a soul into the human foetus.

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CHEMISTRY AND PHYSIOLOGY

It is not true that the emergence of organic from inorganic matter is the test case by which Christian theology seeks to prove the intervention of a Creator; not true, therefore, that if (in some inconceivable way) the distinction between organic and inorganic matter could be abolished, the argument for a Creator would fall to the ground; not true that, if some scientist were to succeed in producing synthetic life, he would be usurping something which must necessarily be regarded as a Divine privilege. It is notorious that, throughout the Middle Ages, spontaneous generation continued to be regarded as a normal scientific view. It is difficult, therefore, to imagine how any formula by which life should emerge as the result of some chemical process could bring distress to Christian consciences.

But to contemplate the possibility that the phenomena of life might supervene on some chemical arrangement is not, of course, to admit that life "is" no more than a chemical formula. Whatever else it may be, it is, as a matter of experience, something additional to, and in a different order from, the chemical ingredients of the matter which lives. I cannot resist quoting some words used in this connexion by Professor Haldane (the elder) in the wireless controversy on Religion and Science. "It has also been supposed that it is only because of the extreme complexity of the physico-chemical processes of life that we have hitherto met with so little success in analysing life into physico-chemical

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mechanism. Coupled with this supposition is the confident assertion that by the application of physical and chemical methods to the phenomena of life we are making gradual progress towards a physical and chemical interpretation of life. In the development of physiology, in either recent or former times, I can, however, find no trace of progress in that direction ”.

But, as I say, even if the distinction between organic and inorganic life came to be conceived of as something less than fundamental, the argument for the existence of God would not be gone ; only one development of it. It is true that the first appearance of life in a lifeless universe would be a signal manifestation of that Creative Power which holds the worlds in being—Professor Haldane, in the same essay from which I have quoted, says, “ if we assume that life is not inherent in nature, and that there must have been a time before life existed, this is an unwarrantable assumption which would make the appearance of life totally unintelligible ”. But the traditional argument for the existence of God rests not on the phenomenon of life, but on the very existence of the universe and on the “ motion ” of whatever sort that exists in it.

Probably one reason why some of the omniscientists—Mr Mencken, for example—are so keen to see synthetic life produced is that they imagine it would destroy an argument for the immortality of the soul ; if life can be manufactured, why should it not be annihilated? But it is hardly necessary to point out that Christianity does not associate immortality

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with the possession of life, or even of conscious life, but with the possession of a rational soul.

HISTORY

I am not making the mistake of including history among the natural sciences. The sciences argue back from particular instances to the general principles which are thought to underlie them ; history is concerned with particular facts first and last. It may attempt to trace general tendencies, and set the facts in their right perspective as belonging to and illustrating those tendencies ; but its aim is not to construct laws which will remain permanently valid ; it is concerned to establish the truth of particular facts and enable us to see them in their true light. And its judgments do not achieve finality ; except where archæology has intervened, or research has lighted on some happy discovery, there is no development in its certitude ; all we can say is that the best historians of the present day think this and that ; their successors may be otherwise inspired. I will not, therefore, attempt any estimate of modern results in the historical field ; from which, in any case, Christian apologetic would have little to fear. But I will refer once more to the history of science, and its treatment by the omniscientists ; the more readily, since Professor Huxley (as we have seen) wants to have it taught in all elementary schools, to the confusion of the orthodox.

It is not true that Christianity—or the Catholic Church, which is here more immediately under suspicion—has ever

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opposed research from the fear that it might lead to results destructive of theological conclusions. Indeed, Father O'Hara points out, in the wireless debate from which I have already quoted,¹ that in the early days of the scientific revival it was sometimes a theological impetus that led to important discoveries; he cites Copernicus, Kepler, and Maupertuis. It is true that the Christian world has sometimes discouraged by legislation forms of research which were, or seemed, revolting to human sentiment. Thus it kept in force the old pagan legislation against dissecting human subjects, with its corollary of body-snatching; and it is certain that the same embargo would be placed on any attempt to experiment with the human foetus for research purposes. In much the same way there is a powerful agitation in our own day which would prohibit the use of living animals in the laboratory; an agitation which would have had more chance of success if it had not been for the Christian instinct that man is by right lord of creation. Such handicaps to the advancement of learning may be regrettable from the scientists' point of view, but they are not designed to discourage the advancement of learning. They are imposed in the belief that the suggested procedure is wrong in itself; we are not allowed to do evil in order that good may come of it.

Galileo's case is, of course, the apparent objection to the principle laid down at the beginning of the preceding paragraph. What his judges did, with great unwisdom,

¹ *Science and Religion* (Gerald Howe, 1931).

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was to condemn a theory which (to them at least) seemed to be still unproved by experiment, because it conflicted with an over-literal interpretation of a Scripture text. They applied too strictly St Augustine's maxim that the Bible should always be interpreted in its literal sense unless proved fact shows that such a sense is inapplicable. Let so much be granted ; what view ought History to take of the whole episode? What is its true setting in the series of world-events? It is here that the omniscientists seem to me at fault ; they have isolated and enthroned the story in a spirit of unreality. Their own, quite modern, consciousness of a maladjustment between the religious and the scientific standpoints has been read back into an earlier age, and Galileo is becoming the victim of a hagiography. Lord Russell is surely perverse in implying that if Galileo had not taken up the mantle of Copernicus nobody else would. If it had been somebody else, without Galileo's impish wit, his positiveness, his capacity for making enemies, would there have been any trial, would there have been any wrong verdict? Copernicus, it is true, did not live to answer for his speculations ; but his book was published, dedicated to a Pope, and there was no trouble. It is ridiculous to pretend that the mind of Christendom was not, at that age, already opening itself to the possibilities of the experimental method. It was just at the same time that Gassendi was publicly distinguishing between the doctrines of the Church, for which he announced himself ready to die, and the Aristotelian system generally, which he abandoned in favour

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of the Epicurean. He was rewarded with ecclesiastical preferments.

The trouble about selecting Galileo as your trump card is that you have nothing to lead up to him with. He is an isolated case, not the symptom of a tendency. Of this, the omniscientists are vaguely aware, and deal with the difficulty after their kind. Lord Russell asserts that "Galileo was the last of the great Italians. No Italian since his day has been capable of delinquencies of his sort". But he was survived by the three great founders of modern anatomy, Vesalius, Eustachius, and Fallopius; and within a century of his death Galvani and Volta, as pioneers of electrical discovery, had passed into the vocabulary of the human race. Mr Heard draws attention to the laws against dissecting human subjects; as we have seen, he misconceives the issue. And Mr Mencken is reduced to quoting Cardinal O'Connell, who doubts whether there are really many people who understand Einstein. . . . Is it very perverse criticism to suspect that when a man uses bad arguments he uses them for want of better?

PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY

It is not true that modern physics, or modern chemistry, or that liaison between chemistry and physics which has been so much under discussion lately, have superseded the whole "world-background" against which the theology of the Christian religion was built up, and antiquated the one with the other. Words like "form" and "substance";

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which are extensively used in Christian theology, are derived, indeed, from the metaphysical vocabulary of Aristotelian thought. But metaphysical thought does not depend on this or that physical theory; and, if the study of metaphysics is in these latter days unpopular, that is because the science has been neglected, not because it has been exploded. It seems quite possible that the hesitations of the modern physicist over the very nature of the subject with which he is dealing may lead to a revived interest in metaphysics; if so, theology will not be the loser. Meanwhile, it would no doubt be dangerous for the Christian apologist to base his arguments on gaps in the physical theory, and he is not likely to do so.

PSYCHOLOGY

It is not true that, by investigating the occurrence of unconscious or half-conscious reactions, whether in human beings or in animals, the psychologist has lowered our sense of human dignity. We always knew, and human language everywhere testifies, that there is an animal side in our nature; that our passions and emotions are closely bound up with our physical constitutions; that a whole multitude of our daily actions are not directed by any conscious motion of the will. We always supposed that many of our individual tastes and preferences must be rooted in half-forgotten habit, or in the association of ideas, since we knew that they were not dictated to us by reasoned choice. We always admitted, and legal practice attests it, that there are states

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and attitudes of mind, short of actual lunacy, which obscure the normal exercise of judgment and overpower the will without its culpable consent. The present investigations of psychology, if they lead to any plausible result, may be a source both of interest and of benefit; but the very possibility of such investigation stops short just where the highest and the most characteristic part of man begins, that is, when he acts or reflects consciously. And this conscious life transmutes the instincts which come to us from our animal nature into something other; sex desire issues into love, herd instinct into patriotism, and so on. "To neglect this meaning", says Professor Haldane, in the essay from which I have quoted, "is simply bad psychology, such as is still rampant at the present time".

The danger psychology has for the thought of our age is not so much any thesis it can attempt to establish in criticism of our philosophies as an attitude it brings with it to the discussion of every question, an attitude which implies the abnegation of the reasoning faculty. But any science, it is evident, which casts doubt on the validity of all our mental processes, thereby and to that extent undermines both itself and all other science whatever.

Finally, no investigation by scientific methods of abnormal states, under hypnosis, for example, can pronounce judgment on what are described by Christian theology as the higher states of prayer. It remains possible, as it was always possible, for the unbeliever to discredit these at the outset; and it is at best a precarious form of

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apologetic that can be based on such "experiences". But, however close might be the observed resemblances between, say, a subject under hypnotic trance and a saint in ecstasy, they would necessarily be external resemblances, and tell us nothing about the inner influence from which they proceed.

In saying all this, I am not suggesting that the progress of scientific research has nothing to do with the decline of the religious sentiment which, both in our own country and elsewhere, is largely contemporary with it. It is only one among many influences which have contributed to that decline, and I doubt whether it is by any means the most important; but the contribution can hardly be doubted. Only, I am inclined to think that the present atmosphere of conflict between science and religion is due rather to a backwash from last century than to anything which has happened in this. The idea that "science" is to be regarded as a single body in the State with its own interests to maintain, and that there is a specifically "scientific" outlook which must needs have a single philosophy to express it, has arisen, I think, from the old Victorian debates, whose influence has now slowly filtered through, by way of the schools, by way of popular literature, by way of newspaper culture, to the apprehension of the man in the street. I regret the attitude of the omniscientists, because I think they are doing their best to perpetuate an unnecessarily sectarian attitude, fanning a prejudice in certain minds under the pretence of building up a new culture to replace the Christian culture

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they would fain think lost. I doubt whether such a culture could be constructed out of our present materials were it needed ; I am very certain that science could do little to organize or to inspire it. Science has an honourable mission, but it is not that of moulding the whole character of a civilization. It can show us the means to acquire a given end—as, for example, to travel at three hundred miles an hour, or to destroy a city with poison rays, or to breed dogs that will walk on their hind legs ; but it can tell us nothing about the value of the end proposed, and humanity, to the last, will remain free to decide what ends it thinks admirable. This, as a rule, scientists recognize ; nor do they feel that a slight has been put on their profession when it is mentioned. But of these modern priests of science I am more doubtful ; they mean business, and they talk the language of fanaticism. It may be some day they will issue a challenge, which humanity, I hope, will not be slow to accept.

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